

RECRUITING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Tackle the “fear of uncertainty” and create an inclusive working environment

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Dissertation presented as partial requirement for obtaining the
Master’s degree in Statistics and Information Management

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ABSTRACT

Despite being the world's largest minority group, and many researches that showed a favourable attitude of employers toward hiring people with disabilities, people with disabilities are still underrepresented across countries, even in the most advanced economies.

"Fears of uncertainty" and "lack of experience" are often pinpointed as the reasons that prevent companies from hiring people with disabilities. Therefore, to encourage companies to hire people with disabilities and create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities, this research aimed at exploring the perceived fears and risks associated with hiring people with disabilities, and how these fears and risks can be managed. Moreover, suggestions on things that can be done to create an inclusive working environment are also examined.

The research first started by looking into the existing studies about the topic to understand the concept of diversity, inclusive working environment, disability, as well as the perceived benefits and perceived risks of hiring people with disabilities possessed by the companies.

Afterwards, 28 in-depth interviews with manager and employees with and without disabilities were conducted.

In the end, this research reviews and provides guidance on how companies can better recruit and create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities in the workplace.

Key words: *Diversity, Inclusive workplace, Disabilities, Risk management, Human Resource risk management*

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

According to the United Nations (n.d), around 15 % of the population (more than 1 billion people) that live on our planet have some kind of disability, which makes them the world's largest minority group.

Since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006, significant progress has been made in promoting equal rights, inclusion and empowerment of disabled people in society. Over the last 10 years, the CRPD has raised awareness to provide people with disabilities (PWDs) with access to health, rehabilitation, support, education, and especially to employment (United Nations, 2016).

However, despite the fact that researchers have pointed out a generally favorable attitude and willingness of employers to hire disabled adults (Burke et al., 2013), as well as several significant benefits of such recruitment for companies (Lindsay et al. 2018), PWDs are still underrepresented in the In developing countries, 80 percent to 90 percent of working-age persons with disabilities are unemployed, compared to 50 percent to 70 percent in developed countries. Even in the most advanced economies, the official unemployment rate for PWDs of working age is at least two times that of people without disabilities in the workforce worldwide (United Nations, n.d.).

As indicated by the United Nations (n.d), and Kaye et al. (2011), across countries, misperception, prejudice, "fear of the unknown" and perceived risks due to lack of experience in recruiting PWDs were pinpointed as the main barriers that keep companies from hiring PWDs.

To tackle these fear and the common associated risks encouraging companies to recruit PWDs, this research aims at exploring the fears and perceived risks that keep companies from hiring PWDs, reviewing the benefits of hiring PWDs for companies, and provide guidelines on best practices that companies can utilize to recruit and create an inclusive working environment for PWDs employees.

1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To address the previously stated research problems, this paper aims at attaining the following three objectives:

- Exploring the common fears as well as perceived risks that keep companies from hiring PWDs
- Exploring how companies can tackle the fears as well as manage the perceived risks and provide an inclusive working environment for PWDs

To achieve these objectives, this research will address the following research questions:

- What are the perceived fears and risks associated with hiring PWDs?
- What are the perceived benefits of hiring PWDs?
- What can be done to help companies tackle the fears and manage the perceived risks in order to recruit and create an inclusive working environment for PWDs?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to deliver a comprehensive understanding of the scientific researches that have been done on this topic, this section will review related concepts to the research questions and identify a gap in the literature that this paper aims at filling in.

The literature review will start by explaining the concept of a diverse workforce, an inclusive working environment, and human resources risk management and why they are important. This will be followed by the history of the disability concept, the current accessibility of PWDs to the job market, as well as related frameworks for disability. Afterwards, this research will look into why companies should hire PWDs, what common fears and perceived risks are preventing companies from hiring PWDs, as well as the available scientific evidence to debunk the myths. Finally, we will go through existing findings on how companies can recruit and create an inclusive working environment for PWDs.

2.1. DIVERSE WORKFORCE

As defined by Irde (2016) and Bouroniko (2021), a diverse workforce consists of individuals with unique characteristics and backgrounds. This type of workforce helps bring in diverse skills, perspectives, and experience, which are crucial for developing new ideas and generating innovation. In order to have diversity in the workplace, companies need to actively and consciously recruit employees with varied backgrounds, skill sets, gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, education, sexual orientation, and other factors. However, Irde (2016) and Bouroniko (2021) also pointed out that to maximize the benefits of a diverse workforce and fully utilize their talents, companies need to also create an inclusive workplace environment.

In a 2003 report from the European Commission, some benefits of a diverse workforce are mentioned such as *“strengthening long-term “value-drivers”* and *“generating short and medium-term opportunities to improve cash flows”*. Nevertheless, the report also points out the hidden costs of a diverse workforce:

- Costs from diversity by hiring specialists, training for employees, and possibly changing working conditions.
- Costs of Legal Compliance. When hiring a diverse workforce, legal costs might arise so the company complies with the current legislative requirements. These costs will vary according to the geography of each company.
- Business Risks of Diversity- some programs that aim to create a diverse workforce environment might take more time and resources to implement than what was first planned by the business.

2.2. INCLUSIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Inclusive working environment and diverse working environment are definitions that are often assumed to represent the same thing. Diverse working environment is representation in the company's workforce. (Harvard Business Review, 2017).

However, an inclusive working environment is a different concept. According to Irde (2016) and Bouroniko (2021), an inclusive workplace environment is one where employees are comfortable being their true selves and embracing their distinct characteristics, while having equal opportunities and being treated equally. As Sokolova (2016) pointed out, an inclusive working environment would make employees feel welcome, appreciated, included and integrated into the workforce. By having a diverse workforce and an inclusive environment, companies can attract and retain the best employees.

Over recent years, companies have been making efforts in order to create a more inclusive working environment. Corporations are adopting diversity goals within their strategic planning and changing organization-wide policies, but these changes are focused mainly on the organization's internal processes. This fact highlights that companies should rethink the way they are building inclusive working environments for their employees. (Barak, 2000).

Several studies have shown that having diversity in a workforce doesn't necessarily mean we are creating an inclusive working environment. In a study conducted by Harvard Business Review (2017), found that people of color, especially at the top, are hampered by giving special treatment to other people of color. In comparison, this same feeling could not be found in the case of Caucasian top managers.

2.3. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) RISK MANAGEMENT

As Crane et al. (2013) explained, uncertainty and risk are closely related and are often used interchangeably. Risk is defined as the possibility of loss or an adverse event as a result of an activity, while uncertainty is the inability to predict what will occur in the future. The more uncertainty, the bigger the risk.

In a corporate environment, risk and uncertainty are managed through risk management, which is a set of activities within an organization undertaken to deliver the most favourable outcome and reduce the volatility or variability of that outcome (Hopkin, 2018). As Watkins (2020) simply put it, risk management is identifying possible uncertainties or risks to your organization and determining the best strategies to address them.

As Power (2009) pointed out, processes for risk management and mitigation should be explicitly linked to organizational and sub-organizational goals. Organizations should aim to identify all material risks to their objectives and sub-objectives, as well as develop controls and mitigations that result in a residual risk that is consistent with a target. Risk management can help with better decision-making and efficiency, as well as provide more assurance to all the major stakeholders of a company.(Hopkin, 2018)

Meanwhile, as Watkins (2020) indicated, HR risk management is a crucial part of a company's risk management, which focuses on identifying and managing the unique risks that workers represent to the company. This might include risks related to poor staff management, employee conduct, or the manner in which you hire and fire people.

Other authors argue that the core and premise of human resource risk management is the assessment of human resource risk, and it is directly related to the effectiveness of human resource risk management.(Huang, 2017).

According to Kraev and Tikhonov (2019) currently there are three key areas of human resources risk management development:

1. Risks and risk occurrence prevention, and their consequences impact on the organization's structure;
2. Minimization of adverse impact on the environment company, that might be influenced by a multitude of factors and hazards.
3. Examine the positive parts of the risk, such as more income, bonuses for risk detection, and those that a business can earn in a risk situation.

2.4. RISK MANAGEMENT FOR HIRING NEW EMPLOYEES

As identified previously by Watkins (2020) one of the risks that risk management in human resources handles is the risk related to hiring and firing employees.

According to an article in Forbes (2016), bad hiring has a negative impact on the morale and productivity of companies. As Forbes mentioned, managers have noticed that high performance workers have decreased their performance due to bad hiring. From a financial perspective, the U.S. Department of Labor calculates that a bad hire might cost around 30% of that person's yearly salary.

The issue becomes more serious when the methodology that firms are using to find new talent is outdated, as stated by Harvard Business Review (2020). According to this institution, one of the most used and important tools for hiring personnel, is not a good indicator of future job performance due to the subjective approach that this method has.

Another method that this puts into question is case based interviews. Supporters of this method have long argued that it is an effective way to ensure that you only hire talented applicants. Nevertheless, according to Harvard Business Review (2020) there's not any evidence this is true.

Keeping these risks in mind, Keller (2017) created a model that helps tackle some of the issues in the hiring process of people in order to mitigate the risk of making bad hires. According to this consulting company, in order to attract and select the best possible talent, companies:

- Work on their employee value proposition. Most companies create this through financial incentives, but also by building a diverse and inclusive workforce environment.
- Use more technology in the hiring process. The same article mentions that professors at the University of Minnesota examined 17 studies and discovered that hiring algorithms outperform people hiring by at least 25% in terms of job performance and time on the job.

When it comes to hiring people with disabilities the complexity increases, which makes it more important that companies value the measures proposed by Keller (2017).

2.5. DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

According to Lezzoni and Freedman (2008) and the World Health Organization (2011) and Smeltzer, Mariani and Meakim (2017), "disability" is a long-standing, multiplex, multidimensional, and evolving concept which societies have been grappling to define. There is not a singular definition to characterize PWDs.

Even from the same perspective, which is the legal perspective, the "disability" definition also varies across countries.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was introduced in 1990 to enforce civil rights protections for PWDs, and makes it illegal to discriminate against someone because they have a disability or are related to someone who does. Under the ADA, a person with a disability is defined as a person who suffers from a mental or physical disability that severely restricts one or more key daily activities. The "disability" definition of the ADA also includes:

- People who previously had impairments, even if they currently do not have a disability. An example of this case is a person who had cancer treatment and has returned to work.
- Individuals who do not have a disability but are treated by an entity as having one.

(Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990)

In Australia, the Disability Services Act in 1993, which to acknowledge the rights of PWDs, protect them from discrimination and ensure the disability services be provided for PWDs, defined "disability" as any ongoing condition that limits daily activity. This condition is:

- caused by an mental, cognitive, neurological, intellectual, sensory or physical disability, or a mixture of these impairments
- either a live-long situation or likely to be a live-long situation
- could be chronic or episodic in nature
- significantly reduces a person's capacity for speech, social engagement, learning, or movement, or creates a need for ongoing support services.

According to the Disability Services Act of Australia, disability can be categorized into the following five main types:

- Physical disability - this is commonly associated with disorders of the respiratory, musculoskeletal, circulatory, and neurological systems.
- Sensory disability - this includes visual and hearing impairments.
- Intellectual disability - this includes both intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is associated with difficulty with learning, thinking, remembering, communicating, applying knowledge, forming judgements, and solving problems. This type of disability is caused by the combination of developmental cognitive impairment, attitudinal and environmental obstacles.
- Neurological and cognitive disability - this refers to acquired disabilities like traumatic brain damage or multiple sclerosis.
- Psychiatric disability - this refers to psychiatric disorders, such as phobias, anxiety disorders, or depression, which result in disability.

The Disability Services Act in 1993 also pointed out that the restrictions that many PWDs experience could be alleviated with the proper means of support and services. (Disability.wa.gov.au, n.d.)

In the UK, the Equality Act 2010, which aims at protecting people from discrimination in both the working environment and in wider society, defines "disability" as a physical or mental impairment that:

- Has a noticeable negative impact on a person's ability to perform daily activities.
- Lasts for 12 months or more

"Disability" under the Equality Act 2010 of the UK also includes people who have progressive conditions, which worsen over time, as well as people who have been diagnosed with cancer, HIV infection, or multiple sclerosis (Gov.uk, n.d.)

Meanwhile, from a medical and social perspective, the World Health Organization (2011) defines "disability" as an umbrella word which refers to any health conditions that are related to the three following areas of human functioning issues:

The World Health Organization (2011) also emphasized the crucial role that the environment has on the extent of disability and the experience of PWDs. Examples of how the environment may have a detrimental impact are as below:

- a deaf person who does not have access to a sign language interpreter
- a wheelchair user who works in a building without an elevator or accessible restroom
- a blind individual using a computer that does not have screen-reading software

Therefore, similar to the Disability Services Act of Australia, the World Health Organization (2011) also deems that changes in the environment can be used as a way to improve the experience of PWDs.

This definition from the World Health Organization is widely used by several authors and organizations, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.), Iezzoni and Freedman (2008), and Disabled World (2019).

Adding to this definition, both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.) of the US and the World Health Organization (2011) agreed that even though PWDs are often referred to as a single population, they are in fact a very diverse and heterogeneous group. Even for people with the same type of disability, they also have different needs. Therefore, any generalization about PWDs could be misleading.

Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.), World Health Organization (2011) and Disabled World (2019) pointed out that several variables of disability need to be taken into account:

- Disability can be either visible or invisible, meaning it might not be apparent immediately to other people. Some examples of invisible disabilities are chronic pain, chronic illnesses, diabetes, or sleep disorders (Disabled World, 2019).
- Disability can be intrinsic or appear later in life.
- Disability can be either temporary or long term.
- Disability can be progressive (such as muscular dystrophy), static (such as limb loss), or episodic (such as multiple sclerosis).
- Disability can be painful or painless.

Although all the mentioned definitions from the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, the Disability Services Act in 1993, the Equality Act 2010, and the World Health Organization (2011) define "disability" based on the health condition of a person, the scope of conditions considered as "disability" under each definition does vary. Additionally, while the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 and the Equality Act 2010 only focus on the health condition aspect of disability, the Disability Services Act in 1993 and the World Health Organization (2011) do emphasize and suggest the use of the environment as a way to alleviate the extent of disability.

As the definition from the World Health Organization (2011) is more comprehensive and covers several factors of disability, this research will also utilize this definition moving forward. However, it is important to note that the mentioned definitions only appeared very recently, thanks to the progress of the disability concept. To give a more in-depth view on how the disability concept has evolved over time, the next section will look into the history of disability.

2.6. HISTORY OF DISABILITY

According to the Disability Social History Project - Timeline (n.d), the first time a person with a disability was mentioned in history was in an Indian ancient poem back in 3500 BC. For many centuries after that, PWDs needed to face tremendous barriers and a negative attitude from the general public. Over time, the concept of disability and its definition have evolved, especially in the last couple of decades. Several authors, including Smeltzer et al. (2017) and the World Health Organization (2011) agreed that the evolution of disability concept is because society and the perception of disability have progressed. However, while Smeltzer et al. (2017) believe that "disability" has not changed, or has become more common, the World Health Organization (2011) indicated that disability has grown increasingly prevalent as the lifespan of people has increased. As the World Health Organization (2011) pointed out, although everyone is subject to being permanently or temporarily impaired throughout their life, those who survive to old age will likely need to face more difficulties in functioning. Hence, the number of PWDs also increases as people age.

Meanwhile, to give a quick overview about how the concept of disability has evolved over time, this section will review the history of disability over two main phases - prior to World War I and post World War I.

Early views of Disability - prior to World War I

Despite recent progress, PWDs have been stigmatized and discriminated against throughout history. Prior to the 16th century, this was the darkest era for PWDs. According to Grant et al. (2013) and Smeltzer et al. (2017), during this time, disabled people were seen as those to be blamed for their disabilities. Disability was perceived as a punishment from God for the misbehavior of sinful people or of their ancestors. Some cultures saw disability as a sign of the devil or as a defect of the individual. Due to these myths about disability, for centuries, PWDs have been abused, shunned, mistreated by society and even abandoned by their families. Those with severe disabilities were hidden at home, away from public view, or even kept in cages. Some with visible disabilities were forced to work for entertainment (in circuses or freak shows), or to beg for money on the street. PWDs were treated either as objects of pity or fear. As the public were afraid of PWDs, they were not accepted by their families or society, and were denied access to what others received, including health care, education, employment, and marriage.

Between the 1600s and 1800s, the public began to view disability as a medical problem that is the result of trauma, diseases, or other health conditions (Jarrett, n.d.). From this, the medical model of disability, which viewed disability as a health issue for PWDs, was born. The approach by which societies treat PWDs has shifted to trying to cure the disabling condition or modifying the behaviors of people with a disability (Smeltzer et al., 2017). As Grant et al. (2013) and Smeltzer et al. (2017) noted, during this century, special schools for children who are "mentally handicapped", and institutions for people with developmental disabilities were set up by states to create a lifelong institutional environment for these people. As PWDs were still perceived as a threat to the community, the states tried to segregate them by building schools and institutions on the outskirts of town. This seclusion from society "further stigmatizes people".

From the 1800s until 1914, though PWDs gained more access to health care and education, the public's perception of disability hardly progressed. PWDs continue to live in a "parallel world", where they are confined to buildings for disabled people. During this time, words like 'cripple', 'insane', 'idiots', 'defective', 'mentally deficient' or "idle" were used to describe PWDs (Jarrett, n.d.). According to Grant et al. (2013), in 1913, the Mental Deficiency Act was introduced in the UK to make provisions for the institutional treatment of people with mental health or learning disabilities, who were referred to as 'feeble-minded', 'imbeciles', 'idiots' or 'moral defectives'. This Act further caused several more people with learning difficulties to be incarcerated (Grant et al., 2013).

Due to the lack of access to resources, the barriers from society, and the non-existing way for them to contribute to society, PWDs were perceived as burdens, not only to their families but also to society (Smeltzer et al., 2017).

Progress on the views of Disability - after World War I

After World War I (from 1914 to 1918) ended, eight million ex-servicemen, including soldiers and sailors, became disabled after the war. These people needed ongoing care, medical treatment, and financial support to continue their lives after the war (Jarrett, n.d.). The return of ex-servicemen from the war played a crucial part in strengthening and encouraging international interactions and promoting the welfare of people who became disabled (Salvante, 2020). Several initiatives by the government and the public were carried out to help these ex-servicemen. New artificial limbs, which were made of light aluminium instead of heavy wood, and plastic surgeries were offered, while gymnastic exercise centers were set up to help these people recover and get back to their daily lives. The rise of welfare for ex-servicemen also eventually benefited other PWDs. In 1918, in the United Kingdom, the Education Act, made schooling for all disabled children compulsory (Jarrett, n.d.). However, the resources were still mainly spent on supporting disabled servicemen instead of being shared evenly among all PWDs. In 1919, The 'King's National Roll' was issued, which encouraged

organizations to recruit disabled ex-servicemen. However, this scheme only had little success, as most disabled people could not find any jobs, other than positions in "sheltered" employment that were set up for them (Jarrett, n.d.).

Meanwhile, in Germany, by 1919, in an effort to rehabilitate disabled veterans, almost every town had rehabilitation centers for people with blindness or physical disabilities. Furthermore, due to labor shortages during and right after the war, employers were glad to hire disabled veterans, but not those with more severe disabilities. In 1920, employment quotas for disabled people were introduced through "The Law of the Severely Disabled". According to this law, employers with 25 or more workers must recruit at least 2% of workers with severe disabilities (Unite the Union, 2014). Though PWDs had gained more benefits and attention from the authorities, the social stigmas and discrimination they received still stood. According to Khazan (2014), during World War II (from 1939 to 1945), disabled people were targeted for mass murder, carried out under the "T-4" program of the Nazis. Under this involuntary "euthanasia" program, it is estimated that around 300,000 PWDs were exterminated, as the Nazis deemed them to be a burden for society.

However, during this same period, progress on rights for PWDs was also recorded. In the UK, the 1944 Disability Employment Act was introduced to provide paid employment, designated vocations, and employment quotas to not only disabled ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen, but also to all PWDs in general, including workers who had been injured in workplace accidents. This was deemed as the first legislation that shifted the focus from a specific impairment group toward PWDs in general. However, this legislation was not executed forcefully, and little effort was made to penalize organizations who did not meet the recruiting objective. Additionally, in the same year, the 1944 Education Act was enacted to encourage the education of students with disabilities alongside non-disabled students in elementary and secondary schools. However, it stipulated that integration was subject to appropriate tuition and financing (Barnes and Mercer, 2004).

After World War II, although there is no source that mentions the official number of veterans who became disabled after the war, the number is believed to be much larger than that of World War I; and it is estimated that around 25,000,000 veterans were wounded in the battles (The National WWII Museum - New Orleans, n.d.). According to Jarrette (n.d.) and Unite the Union (2014), since the aftermath of WWI, rehabilitation has placed a strong focus on increasing physical fitness. In 1948, The Paralympics were born out of a sports competition, which was used as therapy for veterans with spinal injuries from the war.

As Jarrett (n.d.) pointed out, during this era, PWDs started to be more active in fighting for their rights, and many campaigns for PWDs were formed between the 1940s and 1950s. The civil rights

movement in America in the 1960s and 1970s inspired disabled people to take direct action against discrimination, inadequate access, and inequality by starting numerous campaigns. At this time, the social model of disability, which will be discussed further in the later sections, was born and started to emerge. According to Smeltzer et al., (2017), instead of viewing disability as something wrong with a person, the social model sees disability as a result of an inaccessible environment, which prevents PWDs from participating fully in the society. Hence, it suggests adaptation to the environment should be made to remove the barriers.

However, it is not until the 1990s that significant progress can be observed as an increased level of attention has been given to the rights of disabled people. Several regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) introduced in 1990, the Disability Services Act of Australia introduced in 1993 and the Disability Discrimination Act of the UK introduced in 1995, were enacted to fight against discrimination against PWDs and removed the social barriers. One of the milestones during this time also includes the United Nations World Conference on Special Needs Education conference in 1994, where 92 countries recognized that access to education is a fundamental right of all children, and agreed to improve education access for disabled people through an inclusive schooling system. This conference adopted a new Framework for Action, which was built based on the premise that human differences are normal, and schools are responsible for adapting to the needs of the students. Therefore, regular schools should accommodate all children, regardless of their linguistic, intellectual, social, physical, emotional, or other conditions, and all children should study together, where possible (UNESCO, 1994).

Following that conference, countries have started working on improving education and job market access to disabled people. However, disabled people still remain underrepresented in the working market and with the same level of unemployment as they did before these measures were taken place, which is at 54% percent. (Graham & Shier, 2008).

It's important to point out that all sources agree that people with disabilities still face many challenges and difficulties in finding jobs and employment.

2.7. MODELS OF DISABILITY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ACCESSIBILITY OF DISABLED PEOPLE TO THE JOB MARKET

As discussed in the previous section about history of disability, and definition of disability, there are various models of disability, which characterize factors that influence the people's perception of disabilities.

When researching "disability", it is crucial to study different types of models of disability. As Smart (2004) and Retief and Letšosa (2018) agreed, these models are based on the perceived needs of PWDs, and serve several purposes, including defining and shaping perception regarding disability,

explaining causal and responsibility attributions, as well as guiding the formulation and implementation of policy.

However, Smart (2004) and Retief and Letšosa (2018) also highlighted the limitations of these models, which are not value neutral and could lead to discrimination and preconception.

As identified by Retief and Letšosa (2018), the among the most dominant models of disabilities, which will be discussed in the later part of this section, together with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF model), are:

- The Charity Model
- The Medical Model
- The Social Model

Out of these, the two models that are deemed as two of the most common models by several authors and organizations, such as World Health Organization (2011) and Hatton (2020) are the Medical Model and the Social Model.

The Charity Model

According to Duyan (2007), Retief and Letšosa (2018), and Hatton (2020), this model depicts PWDs as victims, who suffer from tragic situations, and should be pitied. As it can be inferred from the name, this model is often used for charity purposes since it draws attention to the hapless and pitiful side of being disabled (Hatton, 2020). From that, it urges for a humane treatment towards PWDs (Henderson and Bryan, 2011) and encourages people to assist PWDs in all possible ways (Duya, (2007) or to donate money (Hatton, 2020). Many authors, including Seale (2006) and Hatton (2020) criticized this Charity Model for describing PWDs as passive and are greatly dependent on the protection and generosity of the surroundings. Hence, according to Hatton (2020), this model causes problems to PWDs in the job market, since they are often think of as charity receivers. Due to this view, the recruitment of disabled people would be seen as doing a favour for PWDs, or as a charity act. When employed this view, companies would not be able to see PWDs as valuable talents, or having beneficial skill sets for the job positions.

The Medical Model

This model (also known as the deficit model) started to replace the moral/ religious model in the mid-1800s (Retief and Letšosa, (2018). According to Olkin (1999) and Hatton (2020), this model views disabilities as negative medical problems, which are defects of the body, and should be "fixed" by medical and other treatments. The medical model indicates that the conditions of PWDs should be cured by physicians and trained professionals, deeming them as experts who knew what was best for PWDs. Meanwhile, PWDs were not perceived as people who are capable of knowing what they

needed, and need to rely on the support from other people in health care and services (Iezzoni and Freedman, 2008).

This model is criticized by several authors due to its negative view of disability. As Creamer (2009) pointed out, terms like “invalid”, “handicapped”, “cripple” or “retarded” all come from this medical model. According to Johnstone (2012), this view of disability leads to a misleading implication that PWDs are not as good or inferior to the “able-bodied”. In a similar view, Hatton (2020) pointed out the issue with this model is that the model focus on what is “wrong” with the person instead of what the person needs. It depicts the differences of PWDs from a person without disability as a deficit, implying that the differences are intrinsically bad, and should be avoided at all costs. Hence, the medical model promotes discriminating against PWDs, and also creates barriers for PWDs when they want to enter the job market.

The Social Model

According to D’Alessio (2011), the social model comes from the British disability movement during the 1960s and 1970s, as an evolution from the limitations of the medical model. Meanwhile, Tregaskis (2002) attributes the birth of this model to the disability rights movement of the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) from the UK in 1976. Explaining this model, Iezzoni and Freedman (2008) and Hatton (2020) stated that this model shifts the focus of the problems from the PWDs and their differences, and locates it within society. Based on this view, people are disabled not by their impairments, but by the barriers that society puts in their way. Therefore, the solution, instead of directing to individual adjustment or rehabilitation, focuses on social change to eliminate the barriers and disadvantages of PWDs posed by society (Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare, 2010). The ultimate purpose of this model, according to Byrne-Haber (2021), is to allow PWDs to have equal access to education, employment, and community participation through adaptations and accommodations of their choices. This model highlights the importance of removing social environments, structural, attitudinal, technological and physical to the inclusion and participation of disabled people.

Though this model is regarded as liberating by many people (Iezzoni and Freedman, 2008), as noted by Giddens (2006), the model also receives some critiques for seemingly ignoring the “painful realities of impairment”.

Hatton (2020) also admitted that the social model is not faultless. However, the author suggested that the social model is the most suitable and recommended model for companies to use while including PWDs in their talent pool.

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) model

Despite a shift from a “medical model” to a “social model” thanks to the movement of PWDs, World Health Organization (2011) claimed that neither of these models is comprehensive. Hence, instead of

viewing disability as either “pure medical” or “pure social”, similar to Shakespeare (2006) and Forsyth et al. (2007), World Health Organization (2011) suggests that various aspects of disability should be taken into account, with a more balanced approach. Therefore, the model that the World Health Organization (2011) deemed as most appropriate to be used is the model of International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF model), which is presented as below:

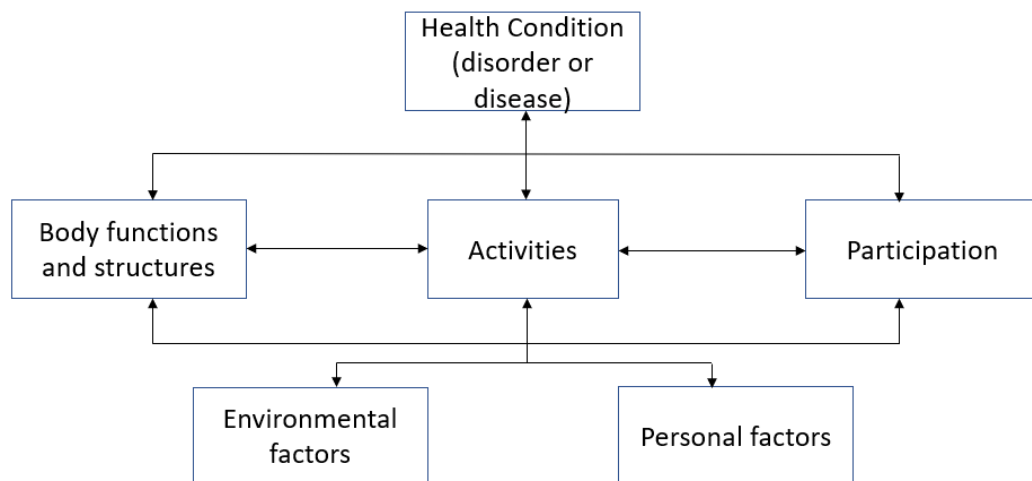


Figure 1. Interactions between the components of ICF (WHO 2011:18)

The ICF model is a combination of the Medical and Social models, which is characterized as a “bio-psycho-social model”. This model conceptualises “disability” as an interactive relationship between a person’s health conditions, environmental factors and personal factors. This model identifies the 4 dimensions related to functioning and disabilities as:

- Body functions and structures
- Activities
- Participation
- Environmental factors

According to WHO (2011), disability emerges from the interaction between people with impairments and the environmental barriers as well as attitudinal barriers, which prevent them from participating fully and effectively in society on an equal terms with others. Identifying “disability” as an interaction of multiple factors implies that “disability” is not a personal characteristic. By addressing the hurdles that limit PWDs in their daily lives, we could help to strengthen their social participation.

The World Health Organization (2011) also noted that many people with disabilities do consider themselves as healthy. As cited by World Health Organization (2011), when responded to the 2007–2008 Australian National Health Survey, 40% of people with severe disability described their health condition as “good, very good, or excellent”.

2.8. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR ACCESSIBILITY TO THE JOB MARKET

As mentioned previously, PWDs are still underrepresented in the workforce across countries, with their unemployment rate ranging from 80 percent to 90 percent in developed countries, and from 50 percent to 70 percent in developed countries. According to the United Nations (n.d), companies often do not consider PWDs as part of their potential workforce due to misperceptions , fear, and prejudice.

In an attempt to increase the representation of people with disabilities in the workforce, some initiatives from governments have been implemented. Besides the initiative of setting the quotas of percentage of PWDs that companies need to hire, which was first introduced in Germany in 1920 (Unite the Union, 2014), many governments, including the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, countries within the EU, China, Singapore, etc. also give tax incentives to companies that hire people with disabilities. According to "A Report of the Disability Rights Task Force on Civil Rights for Disabled People", to increase job market access for PWDs, tax incentives should be given to companies who choose to hire disabled people, and the public sector should show initiative to start gradually employing more disabled people (Department for Education and Employment, 2001).

However, the ideas haven't seemed to bring notable benefits to PWDs. In Canada, although the country has had stable and continuous economic growth over recent years, that wealth hasn't reached disabled people. Disabled people remain underrepresented in the working market and with the same level of unemployment than they did before these measures of giving tax incentives took place, which is at 54%. (Graham & Shier, 2008).

Even when companies hire people with disabilities, very often, they list this action under their act of social responsibility (Gould et al., 2020), which means viewing people with disabilities under the Charity Model, instead of viewing people with disability as a qualified workforce.

Not only facing difficulties in finding jobs, PWDs also need to face lots of obstacles in advancing their career. According to Owen (2019), in a survey with 1002 business leaders, 27 percent of them reported that their companies might not have any benefits in recruiting PWDs. In the same interview, 20 percent of people reported that they would be very concerned, and 58 percent said they would have some concerns about promoting PWDs into a senior position, while only 11 percent of the business leaders said that they have no concern at all. As Owen (2019) pointed out, the results of the survey have demonstrated the numerous workplace biases towards PWDs.

For these reasons, many people with disabilities do not feel comfortable disclosing their disabilities at work. According to Henneborn (2021), in a survey of 5,870 employees, 78 percent of employees

with disabilities reported that they do not disclose their disabilities to their co-workers, HR or managers at work, as they are afraid of being retaliated against, having slower advancement or less important positions in the company. Additionally, they also do not believe that their company culture is truly devoted to assisting them in thriving and succeeding. Therefore, as Hatton (2020) indicated, many employers might have already employed PWDs without realizing it, as around eighty percent of impairment are not visible.

2.9. BENEFITS OF COMPANIES WHEN HIRING PWDs

As Lindsay et al. (2018) pointed out, hiring PWDs can benefit companies in various ways.

Increased productivity

Several studies have suggested that, in terms of work performance, PWDs can be equally productive, or, in some cases, even outperform employees without disabilities. While Hindle et al. (2010) and Bengisu and Balta (2011) found that there is no difference between the performance of PWDs and other employees, Graffam et al. (2002), Bitencourt and Guimaraes (2011), Hartneet et al. (2011), Kalargyrou (2014), and Hatton (2020), through studies across various industries, indicated that PWDs tend to be more productive than people without disabilities. Explaining this, Hartneet et al. (2011) pointed out that PWDs were reported as more reliable, punctual, and dedicated to their work, which consequently increased productivity. Additionally, "Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage | Accenture" (2018) added that, as PWDs need to be creative to adapt to their surroundings, they tend to be keen on innovation and excel at problem-solving skills, forethought, persistence, and flexibility.

Lower turnover rate

According to Buciuniene and Kazlauskaite (2010), Kalargyrou (2014) and Lindsay et al. (2018), PWDs tend to have lower turnover rates when compared to their peers. As the Workplace Initiative (2016) pointed out, on average, PWDs have twenty to thirty percent lower turnover rates when compared to other employees. These authors suggested that the lower turnover rates are due to the sense of achievement PWDs have from employment, and their higher level of loyalty towards companies that invested in hiring and providing them with training. Simons (2001), Schartz et al. (2006), Hartnett et al. (2011), Gewurtz et al. (2016), Workplace Initiative (2016), and Lindsay et al. (2018) all agree that this can significantly benefit companies since a lower turnover rate often leads to fewer costs for rehire, retraining, loss in productivity, and human resources efforts.

Benefit from having a diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace environment.

According to Bitencourt and Guimaraes (2011) and Kalargyrou (2014), by hiring PWDs, companies can benefit from a more diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace culture. As Sokolova (2016) indicates, there are several benefits to having diversity and inclusion in the workplace, including:

- Boosting productivity and innovation.
- Strengthening worker commitment and engagement to contribute to organizational success.
- Increasing employees' health and well-being.
- Reducing the perception of inequality and discrimination among employees.
- Enhancing collaboration and cooperation among co-workers

Access to a larger talent pool and a new customer base

According to the United Nations (n.d.), Sokolova (2016), and Donovan (2020), by hiring PWDs, companies can not only access a larger talent pool, but also create a competitive advantage as they can access a new and diverse customer base. Many companies have discovered that by hiring PWDs, they are better equipped to comprehend and service their clients with disabilities. United Nations (n.d.). As Donovan (2020) indicated, the total after-tax disposable income for PWDs all around the world is around 1.9 trillion dollars, and the disposable income of their families and friends is around 10.7 trillion dollars. Moreover, PWDs also have a tendency to be more loyal to the brand and they spend more per shopping trip as well as go on more shopping trips than the average customer (Nielsen, 2017). Therefore, by adapting services to accommodate the various needs of PWDs, businesses can tap into a large market with notable purchasing power. (United Nations, n.d)

Enhance company reputation

According to Kalargyrou and Volis (2014) and Lindsay (2018), by hiring PWDs, companies can improve their public reputation among their customers, employees, and suppliers. This creates competitive advantages for companies, especially for those in the hospitality and service industries, as it would increase customer loyalty among customers who value diversity and inclusion (Henry, 2014). Based on a survey conducted by the National Business and Disability Council in 2016, 66 percent of consumers will buy goods and/or services from a company that features PWDs in their advertisements, while 73 percent of customers said that they will buy goods and/or services from a company if they know the company hires PWDs (Walton Options for Independent Living, 2016).

Increase profitability

All together, by hiring PWDs, companies can improve their profitability through increasing retention rates, enhanced productivity, access to a larger talent pool as well as customer bases, and gaining more loyal customers. "Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage | Accenture" (2018) indicated that companies which process best practices for hiring and heading toward disability inclusion have outperformed, and, on average, are two times more likely to have bigger total shareholder returns than those of their competitors.

2.10. FEARS AND PERCEIVED RISKS THAT COMPANIES HAVE TOWARDS HIRING DISABLED PEOPLE

Even though there are many benefits of hiring disabled people, as we discussed previously this is still not a common decision made by the companies due to the many concerns, misperception, fear, and perceived risks that companies have (United Nations, n.d).

As Kaye et al. (2011) pointed out as the results of 468 questionnaires, the common concerns that discourage companies from hire PWDs can be categorized in the following groups:

- Job performance
- Costs of accommodation
- Relationship with existing employees
- Legal liabilities
- Lack of experience

Job performance

One of the most common stereotypes that were indicated by United Nations (n.d), Amir et al (2009) and Kaye et al. (2011) is that PWDs do not have good job performers, and are likely to be absent from work. As Amir et al. (2009) point out, and later cited by Retief and Letšosa (2018), employers are often afraid that:

- PWDs need longer time to learn and master new work tasks.
- PWDs need support from others to complete the job as PWDs would have difficulties in getting their work done on time.
- PWDs would call in sick more often than other employees due to health issues or personal problems.

In addition, employers also have doubts about the extra time that co-workers, managers or supervisors might need to spend to adjust PWDs (Kaye et al., 2011).

However, as the United Nations (n.d) and authors mentioned in the previous section, including Graffam et al. (2002), Hindle et al.(2010), Bengisu and Balta (2011), Bitencourt and Guimaraes (2011), Hartneet et al. (2011), Kalargyrou (2014), Hatton (2020), indicated, in contrast to these notions, many companies which hire PWDs have found that PWDs are more than capable. Additionally, Hatton (2020) pointed out that PWDs have notably less time off sick and absence than their colleagues.

Costs of accommodation

Another common stereotype is that accommodation for people with disability to help them perform the work is expensive (United Nations, n.d). Accommodation can be defined as modifications to the

work environment or labour process that allow people with disabilities to be hired (Wilton and Schuer, 2006). This concern that employers have about recruiting people with disabilities was also indicated by several authors, such as Amir et al. (2009), Kaye et al. (2011), Retief and Letšosa (2018) and "Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage | Accenture" (2018).

However, an on-going researches done by Job Accommodation Network (JAN) from 2004 to 2019 have pointed out that most employers report no cost or low cost for accommodating employees with disabilities, as 58% of the surveyed employers said the accommodations needed by their employees cost absolutely nothing while 39% experienced a one-time cost, which on average is \$500 (Job Accommodation Network, 2021).

Relationship with existing employees

As Amir et al. (2009) pinpointed, and later cited by Retief and Letšosa (2018), employers often possesses concerns that:

- Existing employees would not be very comfortable to work and collaborate with PWDs
- PWDs would have difficulties getting along with others on the job.

The fear of an unpopular decision by the other members of the company. They fear the current employees will have doubts about the decision they have made. (Heera, 2016).

According to Hatton (2020), this fear will vanish over time as your workers are more familiar and comfortable working with people with disability.

Legal liabilities

Another indicated fears and perceived risks companies have when consider hiring PWDs are the possible legal liabilities, including:

- Worrying about being unable to discipline or fire a worker with a disability for poor performance, because of potential lawsuits (Kaye et al, 2011).
- The fear of possible litigations to discrimination. They fear disabled people will feel discriminated against in the workplace and might file possible lawsuits that will affect the external image of the company (Heera, 2016).

As it can be since, the root cause for this risk or legal liabilities arise from the fact that whether the person is qualified for the job or not, and whether the companies can create an inclusive working environment for the job or not.

Lack of experience

According to Kaye et al. (2011), employers indicated that they often lack experience and awareness of how to handle and provide accommodation for PWDs. Consequently, they perceived that employing PWDs would create extra challenges, as they will need to get familiar with the employer's

legal responsibilities, appropriate accommodations, costs and benefits, and prepare for unforeseen issues that might arise. Additionally, due to the lack of experience with hiring and working with PWDs, many employers also hold several stereotypes of PWDs.

It can be seen that “fear of uncertainty” has been a main obstacle to keep companies from hiring PWDs. For this reason, the following sections will discuss how companies can tackle and manage this “fear or uncertainty”.

2.11. MANAGING “FEAR OF UNCERTAINTY” WITH HUMAN RESOURCES RISK MANAGEMENT

As we studied in the previous chapter, there are many reasons that explain why companies do not hire PWDs. s we studied in the previous chapter, there are many reasons that explain why companies do not hire PWDs.

All the reasons presented above constitute the main risks that companies face. Hence, it’s important to study how organizations can better manage these risks.

To address this concern, the next sections will look into suggestions from existing academic sources on how companies can include PWDs in the talent pool and create an inclusive environment for PWDs with disabilities, as well as some common questions that might appear.

It’s important to learn about how to recruit and create an inclusive workplace for PWDs before hiring them. This is one of the human resources risk management strategies to mitigate the risk of hiring PWDs.

2.12. RECRUITING PWDs

Harvard.edu. (2013) suggests that to include PWDs in their pool of talent, companies can collaborate with:

- Private or public organizations that have expertise in supporting the recruitment, retention, and advancement of qualified PWDs.
- Colleges or universities coordinator to get in touch with recently graduated students with disabilities.
- Online employment boards that are for PWDs.

Besides, Harvard.edu. (2013) also listed a checklist that companies can follow to improve the recruitment process to also include PWDs:

- Create a diverse interview team by having people who will bring varied perspectives, and who are appreciative of other cultures and characteristics. Organizations should watch out for the possibility of bringing inadvertent bias into the process and counteract it by having a clear and open conversation about this prior to the interview process.
- Ensure equal opportunity and effective communication with all candidates.

- Use the screening process to consider how each applicant could bring diversity to the organizations rather than reject candidates.
- Avoid making assumptions about whether a disabled candidate can "fit in" the team or the role. Focus on the candidate's similarities to, rather than contrasts with, the way of working with the existing team and colleagues. Next, examine if the candidate's distinctions are relevant to the task he or she would perform, and how those differences could affect the outcome. Next, evaluate if the candidate's differences are relevant to the job he or she would perform, and how those differences may benefit the team and enhance team performance.
- Avoid identifying one or more of the candidates as the "most promising" before considering all candidates. This will help to guarantee that all eligible candidates are treated equally.
- Prepare responses to the questions that applicants with disabilities are likely to ask to determine whether an organization is supportive and inclusive. The commonly asked questions suggested by Harvard.edu. (2013) are listed in Appendix A. Harvard.edu. (2013) also pointed out that even if the candidate does not mention any of the commonly asked questions, organizations can still share information related to these questions to persuade the candidate and show sincerity in promoting diversity.
- Organizations can anticipate and prepare some accommodations to allow PWDs to participate in the interview process. Examples of accommodations are: an accessible interview site for a candidate with mobility impairments, a sign language interpreter, a reader or adapted testing.
- Before meeting or calling with a candidate who has a disability, organizations can acquire a better understanding of his or her disability by reading about the condition as it applies to the workplace, as well as accommodation suggestions.
- Though in general, in certain countries, employers can not ask directly about a candidate's disability before making an offer, organizations can still use various methods to evaluate if a candidate is qualified for a position, such as inquire candidates to demonstrate or describe how they would perform certain tasks related to job responsibilities, or asking about their qualifications and skills.

Meanwhile, to Hatton (2020), during the recruitment process of disabled people human resources managers should be careful in certain aspects such as:

- You should not only use an interview to access if the candidate fits the job offer. Ideally, other types of assessment methods(e.g written tests) should be used as well.
- Before the interview, encourage candidates to let you know if any type of adjustments should be made in order for them to feel comfortable.
- During the interview, don't mention so many questions that are competency based. It's natural that disabled candidates don't have relevant working experience and are unable to provide you with clear answers.

- After the interview, make sure the hiring process is shared. Different perspectives can bring a clear picture who is the best candidate for the job.

2.13. CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR PWDs.

Bitencourt and Guimaraes (2011) suggests the following steps to create an inclusive working environment for PWDs:

- Identify, evaluate tasks to be perform and create flexible tasks to enhance inclusivity.
- Inform and ensure that co-workers were sufficiently prepared to work. with those who have a disability.
- Give a brief of the work to the employees with a disability.
- Give training to employees to perform the job.
- Integrate them into the workplace and support them.
- Having regular check-in and quarterly reviews.

Addressing the same topic, Kaye et al. (2011) suggests that in order to have inclusive environment for PWDs, companies should have:

- More or better training on disability topic for managers and supervisors
- A central source of expertise on accommodation issues for the entire enterprise.
- Written policies for dealing with disability issues, such like requests for accommodations.
- A mechanism that is used across the company to handle requests for reasonable accommodations.
- External resources for assistance with issues of disability and accommodation.
- A diversity specialist who deals with disability issues.
- A centralized fund within the organization to pay for job accommodation.

Meanwhile, "Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage | Accenture" (2018) has pointed out four key steps that companies need to do in order to create an inclusive workplace for PWDs and attain the benefits of the diverse talent pool:

- Employ - meaning companies need to start recruiting and make sure PWDs are included in their workforce.
- Enable - meaning PWDs must be provided with accommodations programs and accessible tools to allow them perform the job with their best. Additionally, formal training programs on tools and accommodations should be provided to employees without disabilities in order to improve integration across teams.
- Engage - meaning companies need to engage all employees into the process, and raise the awareness about disability inclusion through disability education programs, employee resource groups and events.

- Empower - meaning companies need to empower PWDs to continue to grow and succeed by offering mentoring, coaching, and skill development programs, so that, PWDs can acquire roles at any levels, including top managerial positions.

2.14. SUMMARY OF MAIN THEORETICAL CONCEPTS PRESENTED.

Throughout the literature review, the existing definition, evolution of the concepts and research related to diverse workforce, inclusive working environment, disability, benefit of hiring PWDs, concerns and fears of companies when hiring PWDs, and how companies can recruit as well as create an inclusive working environment for people have been presented. The table below was created to give a summary of the discussed theoretical concepts as well as the identified gaps.

Authors	Topic	Concepts covered	Meaning	Contrast view	Gap
(Irde, 2016) (Bouroniko, 2021)	Diverse workforce	Definition of diverse workforce	<i>"A diverse workforce consists of individuals with unique characteristics and backgrounds"</i>		
(Irde, 2016) (Bouroniko, 2021)	Diverse workforce	How to maximize the workforce	<i>"Companies need to also create an inclusive workplace environment"</i>		
(Irde, 2016) (Bouroniko, 2021)	Inclusive workplace environment	Definition of workplace environment	<i>"Environment where employees are being their true selves and embracing their distinct characteristics, while having equal opportunities and being treated equally.."</i>		

(Sokolova , 2016)	Inclusive workplace environment	Advantages of an inclusive workplace environment	<i>"an inclusive working environment would make employees feel welcome, appreciated, included and integrated into the workforce"</i>		
(Iezzoni and Freedman , 2008) (World Health Organization ,2011) (Smeltzer, Mariani and Meakim 2017)	Disability	Definition of Disability	<i>"Disability" is a long-standing, multiplex, multidimensional, and evolving concept which societies have been grappling to define"</i>		
(Watkins, 2020)	Risk Management	Definition of risk management	<i>" Risk management is identifying possible uncertainties or risks to your organization and determining the best strategies to address them"</i>	<i>"Organizations should aim to identify all material risks to their objectives and sub-objectives, as well as develop controls and mitigations that result in a residual risk that is</i>	

				<i>consistent with a target.” (Power, 2019).</i>	
(Watkins, 2020)	Risk Management	Definition of risk management in Human Resources	<i>“HR risk management is a crucial part of a company’s risk management, which focuses on identifying and managing the unique risks that workers represent to the company.”</i>	<i>“Human resource risk management is the assessment of human resource risk, and it is directly related to the effectiveness of human resource risk management.”(Huang, 2017).</i>	
(Keller, 2017)	Risk Management	How to mitigate the risk management of new hirings	<i>“Companies should work on their employee value proposition and use more technology in the hiring process”.</i>		
(Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990)	Disability	Definition of Disability	<i>“A person with a disability is defined as a person who suffers from a mental or physical disability that severely restricts one or more key</i>		<i>Only focus on the health aspect of disability</i>

			<i>daily activities.</i>		
(World Health Organization, 2011)	Disability	Definition of Disability	<i>"Any health conditions that are related to: Impairments, Activity Limitations and Participation Restrictions"</i>		
(UK Department for Education and Employment, 2001)	Integration of disabled people in the job market	Incentives for companies to hire disabled people	<i>"In order to increase job market access, tax incentives should have been given to companies"</i>	<i>"Disabled people remain with the same level of unemployment than they did before these measures"</i> (Graham & Shier, 2008)	
("Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage Accenture", 2018)	Integration of disabled people in the job market	Main barriers for companies not to hire disabled people	<i>"Lacking awareness of the scope of talent ; lacking awareness of potential benefits in hiring PWDs; having misperception for the costs versus return on investment of including PWDs in the workforce"</i>		
(Cavanagh et al, 2016)	Integration of disabled people in	How to overcome barriers to hire disabled people	<i>"Closer relationship between companies and governments"</i>	<i>"Different methods of performance"</i>	

	the job market		<i>"Specific training to managers"</i>	<i>evaluation"</i> <i>"More emotional support should be given to employers and employees" (Arksey, 2013)</i>	
(Hatton ,2020) (Retief and Letšosa ,2018) (Duyan ,2007) (Henderson and Bryan, 2011)	Models of disability	The Charity Model	<i>"PWDs are victims, who suffer from tragic situations, and should be pitied"</i> <i>"It urges for a humane treatment towards PWDs "</i>		<i>"Disabled people are think as charity receivers" (Hatton ,2020)</i>
(Hatton ,2020) Olkin (1999)	Models of disability	The Medical Model	<i>"Disabilities are negative medical problems, which are defects of the body, and should be "fixed' by medical and other treatments"</i>		<i>"This view of disability leads to a misleading implication that PWDs are not as good or inferior to the "able-bodied"(Jo hnstone ,2012)</i>
(Byrne-Haber,	Models of disability	The Social Model	<i>"Allow PWDs to have equal access</i>		<i>"Model ignores the</i>

2021)			<i>to education, employment, and community participation through adaptations and accommodations of their choices”</i>		<i>painful realities of impairment” (Giddens ,2006)</i>
(World Health Organization ,2011)	Models of disability	The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) model	<i>“This model conceptualises “disability” as an interactive relationship between a person’s health conditions, environmental factors and personal factors. “</i>		
(Hartneet et al. ,2011)	Benefits of hiring people with disabilities	Increased productivity	<i>“PWDs were reported as more reliable, punctual, and dedicated in their work, which consequently increased productivity”</i>		
(Bitencourt and Guimaraes, 2011) (Sokolova ,2016)	Benefits of hiring people with disabilities	Diverse workforce	<i>“Companies can benefit from a more diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace culture” “Some benefits of inclusive workplace</i>		Research of Bitencourt and Guimaraes is done with samples of

			<i>culture are, boost in productivity, strengthening worker commitment and enhancing collaboration among co-workers”</i>		companies within the footwear industry
(Donovan ,2020) (United Nations ,n.d.)	Benefits of hiring people with disabilities	Access to a larger talent pool and new customer base	<i>“ Companies can not only access a larger talent pool but also can create a competitive advantage as they can access a new and diverse customer base”</i>		
(Buciuniene and Kazlauskaite ,2010) (Kalargyrou ,2014) (Lindsay et al. ,2018)	Benefits of hiring people with disabilities	Lower turnover rates	<i>“PWDs tend to have lower turnover rates when compared to their peers” “Lower turnover rate often leads to fewer costs for rehire, retrain, loss of productivity, and human resources efforts. “</i>		
(Lindsay, 2018) (Kalargyrou and Volis ,2014) (Henry ,	Benefits of hiring people with disabilities	Enhance company reputation	<i>“By hiring PWDs, companies can improve their public reputation among their customers, employees, as well</i>		

2014)			<i>as suppliers. “ “This creates competitive advantages for companies as it would increase customer loyalty among customers who value diversity and inclusion ”</i>		
"Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage Accenture" (2018)	Benefits of hiring people with disabilities	Increase profitability	<i>“Companies which head toward disability inclusion are two times more likely to have bigger total shareholder returns than those of their competitors.”</i>		
(Kaye et al., 2011)	Barriers for hiring people with benefits	Ignorance	<i>“Companies perceive that employing PWDs would create extra challenges, as they will need to get familiar with the employer's legal responsibilities, appropriate accommodations, costs and benefits, and prepare for unforeseen issues that might arise. “</i>		Respondents are human resources professionals and managers who attended disability-related trainings

(Kaye et al., 2011) (As Amir et al. ,2009)	Barriers for hiring people with disabilities	Job performance	“Employers are afraid: PWDs need longer learning time, more support from colleagues and more sick days”	<i>“PWDs were reported as more reliable, punctual, and dedicated in their work, which consequently increased productivity”</i> (Hartneet et al. ,2011)	
(Kaye et al., 2011) (United Nations, n.d)	Barriers for hiring people with disabilities	Costs of accommodation	“Accommodation for a person with disability to help them perform the work is expensive”	“Most employers report no cost or low cost for accommodating employees with disabilities” (Job Accommodati on Network, 2021)	
(Amir et al ,2009)	Barriers for hiring people with disabilities	Relationship with existing employees	<i>“Existing employees would not be very comfortable to work and collaborate with PWDs “</i> <i>“PWDs would have difficulties getting</i>		

			<i>along with others on the job."</i>		
(Kaye et al, 2011) (Heera, 2016)	Barriers for hiring people with disabilities	Legal liabilities	"Fear of possible litigations" "Unable to discipline or fire a worker with PWDs and a poor performance"		
(Kaye et al, 2011)	Barriers for hiring people with disabilities	Lack of experience	<i>"Hiring Pwds would create extra challenges, as they will need to get familiar with the employer's legal responsibilities, appropriate accommodations, costs and benefits, and prepare for unforeseen issues that might arise"</i>		
(Harvard.edu, 2013)	Recruit PWDs	Improve recruitment process for PWDs"	<i>"Avoid making assumptions about whether a disabled candidate can "fit in" the team or the role" "Prepare responses to the questions that applicants with disabilities are likely to ask to determine whether an</i>		

			<p><i>organization is supportive and inclusive. “</i></p> <p><i>“Before meeting or calling with a candidate who has a disability, organizations can acquire a better understanding of his or her disability”</i></p>		
(Bitencourt and Guimaraes, 2011)	Inclusive working environment for PWDs	How to create inclusive working environment for PWDs	<p><i>“Give a brief of the work to the employees with a disability.”</i></p> <p><i>“Integrate them into the workplace and support them.”</i></p> <p><i>“Inform and ensure that co-workers were sufficiently prepared to work. with those who have a disability.”</i></p>	<p><i>“External resources to get guidance on disability and accommodation issues” (</i></p> <p><i>Kaye et al, 2018)</i></p>	

Table 1. Summary of theoretical concepts

Based on the analysis of the concepts mentioned in the table above, it can be seen that the perception toward people with disability has evolved over time. Although there is no universal definition of disability, as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.), World Health Organization (2011) and Disabled World (2019) pointed out, the perception of “disability” in the last few decades has put more emphasis on the importance of environmental factors to the extent of disability and the experience that PWDs have. Additionally, several legislations, such as Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, the Disability Services Act in 1993, the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995, United Nations World Conference on Special Needs Education statement in 1994, and the Equality Act 2010, were introduced to protect the rights of PWDs and promote their participation in society. However, the implementation of these acts, especially those regulations about recruiting

PWDs, have been neglected due to the lack of monitoring and strong control action from the government. Consequently, as United Nations (n.d) and Kaye et al. (2011) indicated, PWDs are still under-represented in the workforce across countries due to the misperception and fear of the companies.

There have been many researches on benefits of hiring PWDs by several authors over the years, such as Simons (2001), Graffam et al. (2002), Schartz et al. (2006), Hartnett et al. (2011), Kalargyrou (2014), Gewurtz et al. (2016), Walton Options for Independent Living (2016), Nielsen, (2017), Lindsay et al. (2018), "Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage | Accenture" (2018), and Hatton (2020). Additionally, authors such as Bengisu and Balta (2011), Bitencourt and Guimaraes (2011), Kalargyrou (2014), Job Accommodation Network (2021) also pointed out evidences to debunk the top misperceptions and concerns of hiring PWDs that employers have, which were listed by United Nations (n.d), Amir et al. (2009), Kaye et al. (2011), and Retief and Letšosa (2018). Nevertheless, companies are still reluctant in hiring PWDs due to "fear of the unknown" Kaye et al. (2011). One identified gap is that though "relationship with existing employees" was listed among the top concerns by employers in hiring PWDs (Amir et al., 2009), (Heera, 2016), research has been focused on having surveys and interviews to understand the perception of human resources professionals and managers, but not with the co-workers and potential co-workers of PWDs.

Meanwhile, authors like Bitencourt and Guimaraes (2011), Kaye et al. (2011), Harvard.edu. (2013), "Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage | Accenture" (2018), and Hatton (2020) have provided guidelines and suggestions on how company can recruit and create inclusive working environment for PWDs. However, to address the "fear of the unknown" from the companies in recruiting people with disabilities (Kaye et al., 2011), this research deemed that more real-life examples on how companies overcome challenges to successfully recruit and create inclusive working environments for PWDs and experience of PWDs in the workplace should be studied to explore if there are any other best practices that companies can follow.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research approach and research design

This research started with the goal of addressing the following research questions:

- What are the perceived fears and risks associated with hiring PWDs?
- What are the perceived benefits of hiring PWDs?
- What can be done to help companies tackle the fears and manage the perceived risks to recruit and create an inclusive working environment for PWDs?

Throughout the literature review the gaps in existing research were identified:

- Lacking research on the perception of co-workers and potential co-workers of PWDs towards recruiting PWDs.
- Lacking research on real examples of challenges that companies face when hiring PWDs and how they overcome the challenges.
- Lacking research on the experience of PWDs in the workplace - what can be done to create an inclusive working environment for PWDs.

Therefore, we created an exploratory research that aimed to discuss how to recruit and create an inclusive working environment for PWDs. Consequently, we conducted in-depth interviews with 28 people from different companies and different countries of the following target groups:

- Group 1: Managers without disabilities that have not worked with PWDs (5 managers).
- Group 2: Employees without disabilities that have not worked with PWDs (5 employees).
- Group 3: without disabilities that have worked with PWDs (4 managers).
- Group 4: Employees without disabilities that have worked with PWDs (4 employees).
- Group 5: Managers with disabilities (1 manager).
- Group 6: Employees with disabilities (9 employees).

The first four groups consist of managers and employees without disabilities, while groups 5 and 6 consist of employees without disabilities. The goal of the exploratory research is to explore the opinions of each target group for the following topics:

- Group 1, 2, 3 and 4 - to explore:
 - The perception of this group toward hiring and working with PWDs
 - Their view on the perceived risks and benefits companies have when hiring PWDs.
 - Their experience and best practices when recruiting PWDs
 - Their view on what can be done to create an inclusive working environment for PWDs.
- Group 5 and group 6: to explore:
 - Their experience and best practices in the recruitment of PWDs

- The difficulties that PWDs face in the workplace and how could this be addressed
- Their experience and best practices when recruiting PWDs
- What makes a workplace inclusive for them.

To reach this goal, the research was designed as exploratory research through in-depth, semi-structured interviews to collect primary qualitative data.

As pointed out by Malhotra & Birks (2006) and Dadhe (2016), exploratory search is suitable when the goal is to gain insights and clarification on the nature of a phenomena. This type of search is also appropriate to identify issues more precisely or indicate courses of action to be taken.

Meanwhile, as indicated by Steber (n.d.) as well as Boyce and Neale (2006), in-depth interviews could help interviewers to create an understanding and trusting environment to help interviewees feel comfortable and willing to share especially for a sensitive topic. In comparison to methods like surveys, with in-depth interviews, interviewers can monitor changes and adjust ways to ask questions more easily to help interviewees fully understand the question. Moreover, with semi-structured interviews, researchers could have more flexibility to navigate the interviews, follow up with new ideas brought up during the interviews, and create more space for information sharing (Robson, 2011). Furthermore, by obtaining primary data, this research can enhance the authenticity, validity and reliability of the data to better answer the research questions (Dadhe, 2016). Therefore, by conducting the exploratory research through in-depth interviews, this research aimed at acquiring accurate and valuable insights to achieve the research objectives.

Meanwhile, in terms of the format of the interview questions, similar to what Kaye et al. (2011) did in their research, this research, when asking about attitude towards hiring PWDs and the perceived risks, utilized structured projective or indirect questioning. This means that the questions did not require participants' to share their own attitudes and experiences, but to speculate the attitudes and behaviours of employers or co-workers in general, and not particularly for their own business. As Kaye et al. (2010) explained, this will help to reduce social desirability bias that might influence the answers.

Some examples of indirect questions used in the interview are as below:

- "In general, do you think companies have a positive attitude toward hiring people with disabilities?"
- "What are some possible concerns you think some companies might have when hiring people with disabilities?"

The detailed topic guide and list of interview questions can be found in **Appendix B**.

3.2. Data collection

In total 28 people, located in 4 European countries, 3 Asian countries and 2 African countries, were interviewed for the research. Due to the difficulties of finding participants that belonged to Group 4, Group 5 and Group 6, we interviewed people from different parts of the world in order to find more participants that meet those requirements.

At the beginning of the research, 5 face-to-face interviews were conducted with 5 interviewees:

- 4 interviewees from group 1 and group 2 (2 managers and 2 employees that have never worked with PWDs).
- 1 interviewee from group 6 (1 employee with disabilities).

However, due to the outburst of the COVID pandemic, as well as in some cases, the interviewees being in different countries than the interviewer, the remaining 23 one-on-one interviews were conducted online. Of these 23 interviews, 16 were conducted via video call, and 7 were conducted via voice call, due to the preference of the participants.

In terms of the sampling method, the research used quota sampling for the six target groups in an attempt to acquire representative samples of the total population at an affordable cost (Malhotra and Birks, 2006). As defined by Malhotra and Birks (2006), this is a non-probability sampling method, which consists of 2 steps:

- Step 1: Establish quotas of interviewees for each group.
- Step 2: Selecting sample elements (interviewees) based on judgement (choosing who the researcher believes that will be representative of the target group) and convenience (who the researcher can get in contact with).

The six groups are split based on 3 criteria:

- Whether the person has a disability or not
- Whether the person is a manager or an employee
- Whether the person has previously worked with PWDs or not

For group 1 and group 2, they have the same topics to be studied, and the opinions of managers (group 1) and employees (group 2) are equally important. Hence, these two groups have the same quota of interviewees, which is 50%. A similar case is applied to Group 3 and Group 4 as well as Group 5 and Group 6. The initial quota of interviewees for each group is given in table below:

		Role of the individual	Has previously worked with with PWDs	
			Yes	No
If the person have disabilities	Yes	Manager	16.6%	
		Employee	16.6%	
	No	Manager	16.6%	16.6%
		Employee	16.6%	16.6%
		Total	100%	

Table 2. Initial quota for each group or interviewees

In step 2, the researcher recruited interviewers through approaching them in person, through social media (including LinkedIn and Facebook) to find individuals that are interested in participating in the research.

In the first part of the interview, according to the topic guide, the researcher asked interviewees whether they identify themselves as a person with disabilities, and if they have already had experience working with people with disabilities or not to classify them into the correct target group. With this approach, no interviewee of group 5 and 6 were identified, and researchers also have difficulties in finding managers and employees who have worked with PWDs. This might be due to the fact that PWDs are underrepresented in the workforce, as mentioned earlier in the research. Hence, not so many people in group 3 and 4 can be found.

For group 5 and 6, the interviewers were recruited through direct contact via LinkedIn, through posts in the Facebook groups of PWDs and through referral. With this method, researchers found 10 PWDs, including 1 manager and 9 employees. As researcher could not get in contact with more managers who have disabilities to meet the desired quota of group 5, researcher has instead included more employees with disability, who belong to target group 6 to make up for the missing interviewees from group 5. The difficulty in finding people who belong to the target group 5 could be explained by the fact that people with disabilities are also underrepresented in the managerial level within the organization.(United Nations, n.d.).

The final proportion of interviewees from each group is presented in the table below:

		Role of the individual	Has previously worked with with PWDs	
			Yes	No
If the person have disabilities	Yes	Manager	3.6%	
		Employee	32.1%	
	No	Manager	14.3%	17.9%
		Employee	14.3%	17.9%
		Total	100%	

Table 3. Final proportion of interviewees in each group

Throughout the interviews, the data were collected through note-taking and through voice recording (whenever the interviewee agreed with that).

3.3. Methods of analysis

The qualitative data collected were analysed following the 4 steps, suggested by Malhotra and Birks (2006), which are: data assembly, data reduction, data display and data verification.

- Step 1 - data assembly: the information was gathered from the notes taken from the interviews, and through transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews.
- Step 2 - data reduction: this entails organizing, removing excessive data, and structuring the data. During this step, the first part of content analysis, which is data coding was carried out, with the aid of QSR NVivo program for word counting and categorizing. In this step, the qualitative data will be broken down into analysable units of data, and grouped into categories of data, depending on the meaning that the units of data convey.
- Step 3 - data display: this involves summarizing and displaying the structure found in the gathered data to demonstrate how the data are connected.
- Step 4 - data verification: this entails scouring additional data sources and theories for alternate interpretations of the results to ensure that the research has given a valid meaning of the data gathered. The researcher must demonstrate that the structure or meaning they perceive is not simply a reflection of their own perspectives (Malhotra and Birks, 2006).

The data were analysed with content analysis, to allow both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data to find patterns and draw conclusions to answer the research questions (Luo, 2019).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For our study, in total 28 people were interviewed for the questionnaire, of whom:

- 10 people identified themselves as without disabilities and have not worked with people with disabilities: including 5 managers with an average of 12.8 years of working experience **(Group 1)**, and 5 employees with an average of 2.2 years of working experience **(Group 2)**.
- 8 people identified themselves as without disabilities and have worked with people with disabilities: including 4 managers with an average of 12.6 years of working experience **(Group 3)**, and 4 employees with an average of 9.5 years of working experience **(Group 4)**.
- 10 people with physical disabilities: including 1 manager with more than 40 years of working experience **(Group 5)**, and 9 employees, on average, have 5 years of working experience **(Group 6)**. The manager and 2 employees have disabilities later on in their lives, while 7 employees were born with disabilities.

4.1. Perceived company's perceptions towards hiring people with disabilities

For people in Group 1 - managers who identified themselves as without disabilities

and have not worked with PWDs, 2 out of 5 managers thought that companies have a neutral attitude towards hiring PWDs. One manager believed that companies are currently having a negative attitude though they should have a neutral attitude, and 2 managers think that companies have a negative attitude towards hiring PWDs.

For Group 2 - employees who identified themselves as without disabilities and have not worked with PWDs, all of them perceived that in general, companies have a negative attitude towards hiring people with disabilities. In fact, 2 out of 5 employees mentioned that since companies are not hiring PWDs, they have never worked with PWDs, while one interviewee who worked in the legal sector mentioned that it is very uncommon to see PWDs in the field.

Meanwhile, for Group 3, managers who identified themselves as without disabilities and have worked with PWDs, 1 out of 4 managers stated that companies in general used to have a negative attitude towards hiring PWDs. However recently, with the support from the government, companies have been more open and more active in this subject. In reality, 1 manager said that companies have a mixed attitude about this subject. Though the person believes that in general, people think it is the right thing to do, there is still a lot of prejudice associated with such recruitment. When thinking about a diverse workforce, people tend to think more about gender, races or cultures, and have not put as much attention to PWDs. As people tend to hire those who are similar to them, they might perceive that hiring PWDs is more challenging and there might be more things they need to learn. With the lack of PWDs in the managerial positions, it is not common for companies to recruit PWDs.

Meanwhile, the remaining 2 managers said that companies have a neutral attitude towards hiring PWDs. However, they believe that big and international companies tend to have a more positive attitude and are more open to hiring PWDs while small companies are less likely to hire PWDs due to the perceived effort and investment needed.

In Group 4, employees who identified themselves as without disabilities and have worked with PWDs, the opinions varies:

- One employee thought companies, in general, have a positive attitude towards hiring PWDs, as more attention has been paid to have a more diverse and inclusive working environment.
- One employee thought that companies have a neutral attitude towards hiring PWDs, but it is also depending on the types of the companies and whether the types of disabilities would impact the job or not.
- One employee stated that companies in his country need to have a quota of PWDs working within the companies. Therefore, it is very common that companies hire PWDs, but normally, only for low-paid jobs.
- One employee said that companies often have a negative attitude towards hiring PWDs. Though in his country, the government sets a quota for the percentage of PWDs that companies need to hire, it is rare to see organizations follow this quota, even in public organizations and in public sectors.

For group 5, manager with disabilities, the only person of this group thinks that companies, in general, are very reserved to hire people with disabilities as they have misperceptions and do not fully understand the benefits of hiring PWDs. Interestingly, the public sector also seems to be less active and involved in hiring PWDs than private companies. However, half a year after the COVID pandemic broke out, she noticed that more companies started to explore the option of hiring PWDs, possibly due to the fact that the majority of people are working from home, which helps to remove certain barriers to PWDs.

In group 6, employees with disabilities, all of the 9 people mentioned that they need to face difficulties in finding a job. One of them, who is blind and currently working as a telephone support, emphasized that there are very limited job options available for him, and during more than 20 years of working, he only has entry level jobs.

Based on the results, it can be seen that in general, people, especially those who have not worked with PWDs, perceive that companies have a somewhat negative and reserved attitude towards hiring PWDs. Since their companies do not hire PWDs, they have not worked with people with

disabilities. Meanwhile, people who have worked with PWDs tend to perceive companies as having a more neutral attitude towards hiring PWDs.

However, as pointed out by the interviewees, depending on the industry area, the types of companies, and the type of disabilities that the person possesses, the perception might vary. The results suggest people perceived that international and big companies might be more open to hire PWDs, due to their increasing focus on having a diverse workforce.

Meanwhile, there are concerns raised by the interviewees that companies sometimes might hire PWDs to do low-paid jobs due to the required quota from the government, or to show their social responsibility, without making sure the job suits the person, or creating an inclusive working environment for PWDs. In such cases, the recruitment might not be well perceived by the existing employees.

Additionally, the answers from the interviewees from all groups also pinpointed the lack of participation of the government in setting examples for organization in hiring PWDs in some countries.

4.2. Interviewee's personal perceptions on whether companies should hiring people with disabilities

To better understand the perception of people in the first 4 groups towards companies hiring PWDs, the interviewees were asked to rate the following sentence on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 is "strongly disagree" and 10 is "strongly agree" - *"Companies should hire PWDs"*.

The respective answers or each group are as below:

- Group 1 - managers who identified themselves as without disabilities and have not worked with PWDs, the interviewees gave an average number of 8.8.
- Group 2 - employees who identified themselves as without disabilities and have not worked with PWDs gave an average number of 7.8.
- Group 3: managers who identified themselves as without disabilities and have worked with PWDs, the interviewees gave an average number of 9.5.
- Group 4 - employees who identified themselves as without disabilities and have worked with PWDs gave an average number of 9.3.
- while the interviewee = 2 out of 5 managers thought that companies have a neutral attitude towards hiring PWDs. 1 manager believed that companies are currently having a negative attitude though they should have neutral attitude, and 2 managers think that companies have a negative attitude towards hiring PWDs.

Explaining the answers, the interviewees from all groups mentioned that despite the fact that they think employers should hire PWDs, they believe that it is crucial that the employers pay attention to the type of jobs to allocate the persons to suitable jobs or give accommodations to support the persons performing the job. Three real life examples were given by the interviewees for cases where PWDs were not given a suitable jobs, which prevent them from demonstrate their abilities:

- An employee with mobile disabilities was given a job that required regular movement around in the store to check and organize the stocks.
- An employee with communication disorders was given a client facing a job.
- A blind intern did not get the equipment needed to perform the job until the very last days before he finished his internship. Therefore, he did not get the chance to demonstrate his value to the organization and did not get a permanent position afterwards.

Overall, the interviewees in the first four groups do think that companies should hire PWDs. However, they also emphasized that companies need to make sure that the types of jobs are suitable for the PWDs or accommodations will be provided for them so they can perform the task well.

Pinpointed possible reasons why employees might have a negative reaction to the recruitment of PWDs includes:

- Employees feel that the company recruits PWDs just to “look good” and to promote a diverse workforce, but do not have concrete action to include the person into the workplace.
- If the person with disabilities was not given a suitable job, or the workloads are not distributed fairly among employees
- For certain types of disabilities, such as mental disabilities, it might not be so intuitive for the employees to understand how to work and interact with the person. Additionally, employees who are not familiar with working with PWDs might be afraid of saying something wrong or misinterpreted by the people.

It is, therefore, suggested that by recruiting qualified people for the job and having training or guidance materials regarding disability awareness available for the existing employees, companies can reduce the risk of negative reactions from the existing employees towards the recruitment.

4.3. Perceived fears and risks that keep companies from hiring people with disabilities

To fulfil the purpose of understanding the perception of associated fears and risks of hiring people with disabilities, people in the first four groups were asked to list the perceived fears and risks they think companies have. The answers are presented below:

Perceived fears and risks that keep companies from hiring PWDs

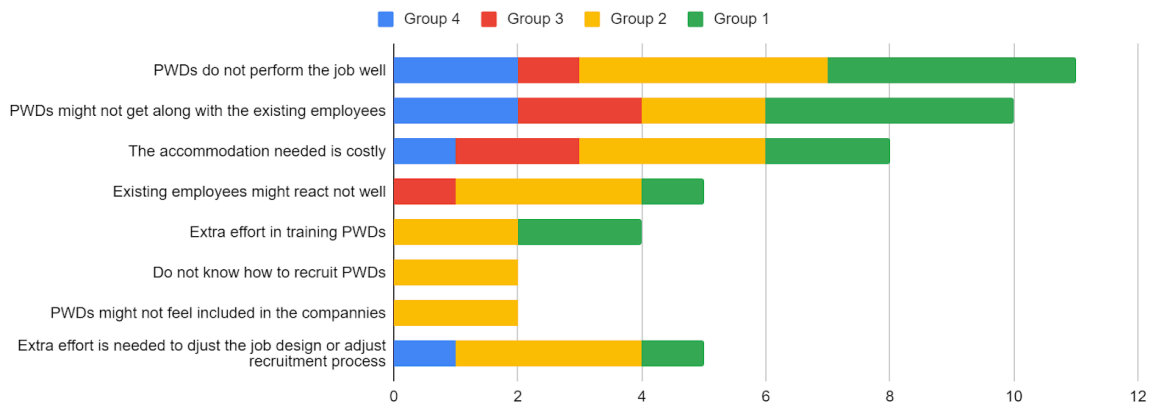


Figure 2. Perceived fears and risks that keep companies from hiring PWDs

As it can be seen, the list of associated fears and risks, ranked by the frequency that they were mentioned are:

- PWDs do not perform the job well as people without disabilities (mentioned by 61% of the people)
- PWDs might not get along with the existing employees (mentioned by 50% of the people)
- The accommodations needed is costly (mentioned by 44% of the people)
- The existing employees might react not well or might question the recruitment (mentioned by 38.9% of the people)
- Extra effort is needed to adjust the job design or adjust recruitment process (mentioned by 28% of the people)
- Extra effort in training PWDs is needed (mentioned by 22% of the people)
- PWDs might not feel included in the companies (mentioned by 11% of the people).

These listed perceived fears and risks can be divided into three main groups:

- The job performance of the employees
- The reaction of the existing employees towards the recruitment and towards the recruited PWDs.
- Whether the companies can create an inclusive working environment for PWDs or not.

Managers in both Group 1 and Group 3 are most concerned about whether PWDs might get along with the existing employees or not. However, out of the four groups, Group 1 and Group 2 are the ones that mentioned the concern about the performance of PWDs the most.

Additionally, during the interview, the questions were not asked to people in group 5 and group 6 to avoid any possible biases. Even so, the manager with disabilities in group 5 and an employee with

disabilities in group 6 also mentioned that very often, companies have fear and negative perception that PWDs are problematic, risky, less productive and expensive to hire.

According to the results, job performance of PWDs is the most prevalent perceived risk mentioned by the interviewees. This result is also aligned with prior research from Amir et al (2009) and Kaye et al. (2011).

Meanwhile, when asked if they agree with the following sentence - "In the workplace, PWDs cannot perform as well as people without disabilities", 6 out of 10 people in Group 1 and Group 2 said "Yes", in comparison with 1 out of 8 people in Group 3 and Group 4. Explaining the answer, two interviewees in Group 2 mentioned that because the word "disabilities" itself already conveys the meaning that the person is lacking some abilities compared to people without disabilities. However, when continuing to elaborate their ideas, these interviewees mentioned that depending on the types of disabilities and the type of jobs, people with disabilities can perform as well as people without disabilities - given that their disabilities are not relevant to the job that they perform. Overall, 15 out of 18 interviewees from the four groups stated that if given a job which is not relevant to the type of disabilities the person has, PWDs can perform as well as PWDs

Based on this, it can be seen that there are still certain stigmas and prejudices about the job performance of people with disabilities, possibly due to the models and narrative that were used to depict PWDs.

4.4. Perceived reasons why companies should hire PWDs and benefits of hiring PWDs.

Meanwhile, when the first 4 groups were asked about the benefits companies can receive when hiring PWDs, "Tax benefits" were the most frequently listed benefit (mentioned by 50% of interviewees), followed by "Demonstrating social responsibility" (mentioned by 50% of interviewees), and "Bringing in new perspectives and generating new ideas" (mentioned by 39% of interviewees). Additionally, "Having diverse workforce" was mentioned by 33% of interviewees, and "Having better public image" was mentioned by 28% of interviewees.

Besides, interviewees also mentioned other reasons why companies should hire PWDs, such as:

- Depending on the job, the "disabilities" PWDs have might not impact the quality of the job (mentioned by 11% of interviewees).
- Increase team spirits and teamwork (mentioned by 11% of interviewees).
- PWDs with certain types of disabilities (such as Asperger's) can outperform people without disabilities in many tasks (mentioned by 6% of interviewees).

- Make existing employees feel proud and more emotionally attached to the company (mentioned by 6% of interviewees).
- Help organizations reach new customers, especially those who value an inclusive workplace (mentioned by 6% of interviewees).
- Help people within the organization to be more open-minded (mentioned by 6% of interviewees)

One of the employees in group 4, who has worked with PWDs also mentioned that sometimes, the benefits of hiring PWDs might be hidden, as changes in the team dynamic can only be observed after a certain period. Hence, companies might not see them as easily as they see the potential instant costs.

Though several benefits were listed, the perceived benefits of hiring PWDs that were most frequently mentioned by the interviewees are related to the tax benefits and the image of the companies. This might be due to the fact that governments, when trying to promote the recruitment of PWDs, often refer to the benefits and the incentives companies can receive, instead of promoting PWDs as valuable employees for their abilities.

Hence, it suggests that governments, as well as companies should adjust the way they refer to PWDs and focus more on the talent that PWDs can bring to the companies.

4.5. Employees's reactions to the recruitment of PWDs

As pointed out by Amir et al. (2009) and Heera (2016), as well as mentioned by the interviewees, one of the top fears and perceived risks companies regarding hiring PWDs is that the existing employees might not have good relationship with PWDs or might react negatively to the recruitments. Therefore, to manage this risk, this research tried to identify the root cause of the situation in order to find possible solutions.

When asked to think about possible reasons why employees might have a negative reaction to the recruitment of PWDs, some scenarios pinpointed by interviewees in group 2 (employees without disabilities who has not worked with people with disabilities) and group 4 (employees without disabilities who has not worked with people with disabilities) include:

- Employees feel that the company recruits PWDs just to "look good" and to promote a diverse workforce, but do not have concrete action to include the person into the workplace.

- If the person with disabilities was not given a suitable job, or the workloads are not distributed fairly among employees, the existing employees might feel that the recruitment is unfair.
- For certain types of disabilities, such as autism, it might not be so intuitive for the employees to understand how to work and interact with the person. Hence, without training or some guidance, employees might not know how to interact with their coworkers who have disabilities.
- Employees who are not familiar with working with PWDs might be afraid of saying something wrong or misinterpreted by the people. Therefore, they might be reluctant to communicate with PWDs.

When thinking about solutions to address these scenarios, the interviewees suggested that when hiring PWDs, companies should hire suitable people for the jobs, and provide accommodations (if needed) so that the person can perform well. Additionally, six out of ten people who have not worked with PWDs and four out of eight people who have worked with PWDs also mentioned that it would be helpful if some training about disability awareness and general etiquette in interacting with PWDs can be provided for all employees to raise the awareness and help the employees to be more familiar with the topic. Though three out of eight people who have worked with PWDs mentioned that no training or guidance is needed as the way to interact with PWDs should be no different than the way they interact with other co-workers, based on the mentioned need from other employees, this research suggest that the training and guidance materials regarding disability awareness should be made available for all employees. Additionally, one person who have worked with PWDs agreed that in general, the way to interact with PWDs should be no different than other co-workers, in certain cases, where the ways the person with disabilities communicate or interact might be greatly different from the general social norms (such as in the case the person have autism), the existing employees should be informed and additional training and guidance must be provided.

Meanwhile, when asked about their perceptions regarding how the existing employees in their teams would feel if the manager hires a person with disabilities, two out of nine employees in Group 2 and Group 4 said that they would feel proud of the team, while three employees said that they think people would react normally. Meanwhile, three employees said that existing employees might have some concerns as they do not know how to interact and collaborate with PWDs and one employee, who works in the legal sector said that people might feel unprepared for such recruitment as it is very uncommon.

Additionally, when asked about how they would feel if being managed by a person with disabilities, four out of nine employees said that though they never thought about it, they would really admire the person and curious about the journey of how they got to the position. 4 employees said that it would make no difference while one employee, who works in the legal sector, had doubts that the person would be suitable for the position.

This, once again, suggests that companies can reduce the risk of negative reactions from the existing employees towards the recruitment by recruiting qualified people for the job and having training or guidance materials regarding disability awareness available for the existing employees. Moreover, the answers also advocates that companies should also be open to recruit and promote people with disabilities into managerial positions.

4.6. Difficulties of PWDs in the workplace

To address the objectives of the research, the question about the difficulties that PWDs face in the workplace was asked to people in Group 5 - managers with disabilities and Group 6 - employees.

As mentioned previously, the first thing the employees mentioned is their difficulty in finding jobs. Only 3 out of the 9 employees received some kind of support from either their schools or association for PWDs to help them find jobs.

Then, the second most common difficulty (mentioned by six out of nine employees in group 6) is that they do not have an accessible office when they join the organizations, and even years after they joined the organizations. Meanwhile, two employees have mild disabilities and do not require any accommodations. Out of the 9 employees, only 3 of them were asked about the accommodation needed to help them perform the job, of which, two of them needed accommodations, and only one of them had the needed accommodations by the time they join the job while the other needed to buy equipment for the job on his own.

The third most common difficulty pointed out by 4 people in Group 6 is when they started the job, their direct supervisors and co-workers sometimes underestimated their capacity to perform the job. As pointed out by two employees, sometimes, they were excluded from tasks because supervisors or co-workers think they can do better than PWDs.

Finally, 3 out of 9 employees stated that they have difficulties in facing the attitude and prejudice from the co-worker. In one of the cases where the person's disabilities are not so visible, the co-workers only find out about the disabilities after a few months. The person noticed a change in the attitude of his co-workers - since they do not know how to interact around him and are afraid that

they might say something wrong, they are more reluctant to communicate with him. Meanwhile, in the other 2 cases, the people have overcome the prejudice after a few months. Overall, 6 out of 9 employees said that they have a good relationship with their co-workers.

Based on the results, it suggested that to create an inclusive working environment for PWDs, companies should ensure that reasonable accommodations (such as accessible office and equipment for the job) should be provided for PWDs. Additionally, as previously suggested, generally training and guidance materials regarding disability awareness should be available for the existing employee to help the employees.

4.7. Experience and suggestions in hiring PWDs

Out of 10 managers interviewed, 3 managers have directly recruited PWDs, including 2 managers in group 3 - managers who identified themselves as without disabilities and have worked with PWDs, and 1 manager in group 5 - manager with disabilities.

When talking about the recruitment of PWDs, all managers mentioned the roles of the government. However, their experience varies as 3 of them are in 3 different countries.

For one manager in group 3, he thought that his government had a big contribution in supporting the recruitment process. Besides having a national job board for PWDs, the government also provided free training for employers on how to recruit and retain persons with disabilities within their organisations, and training to upskill PWDs. Additionally, the government also provided support to check if the office is accessible for PWDs and if any adjustment is needed. Moreover, the government also covers 90 percent of the salary of PWDs in the first year they work for the companies. Hence, it is very helpful to lighten the associated fears or uncertainties and encourage companies to include PWDs in the workforce.

Meanwhile, the remaining manager in group 3 stated that beside offering tax benefits, she has not seen a notable action from the government in including PWDs in the workforce, or setting an example of hiring PWDs. Similar to the previously mentioned opinion of an interviewee in group 4 - employees who identified themselves as without disabilities and have worked with PWDs, she also stated that despite setting a quota of PWDs that companies need to hire, even in the public sector, PWDs are underrepresented.

For the manager in group 5, she also mentioned that she would expect to see the government to be more actively trying to recruit PWDs. Additionally, the narrative that is used by the government to promote the recruitment of PWDs is highly centered around the benefits and the incentive received from the government, instead of promoting PWDs as valuable employees for their abilities.

On the other hand, when talking about things companies can do to improve the recruitment process and include PWDs into the talent pool, as well as to tackle their fear of “uncertainty”, the actions listed by the 3 managers are:

- Identify the essential skill sets that the candidate must have for the position to be included in the job description
- Advertise all new opening positions on the job board for PWDs and share the opening positions with organizations who support PWDs in finding jobs, so that PWDs can be aware of the opportunity.
- Evaluate if the person has a suitable skill set for the position
- Having a trial period to assess the performance of the person in the job

Meanwhile, regarding the job description, 3 out of 9 employees with disabilities in group 6 also mentioned that one of the reasons that would discourage them to apply to the job is if companies mentioned words like “having physical fit”, “should be willing to travel” or “good looking” as the requirements for the candidate, even if they do have the physical fit or willing to travel.

The findings, once again, have emphasized the role of governments in setting examples and promoting the participation of PWDs in the workforce. Additionally, the course of actions suggested would be a source or referral for companies when preparing for the recruitment of PWDs.

4.8 Suggestion to create an inclusive working environment

Throughout our analysis, we have tried to provide an answer to the objectives of research. One of the most important objectives of our study was to help companies to create an inclusive working environment for PWDs.

Based on the answers from PWDs, an inclusive working environment for them is where they could:

- Have suitable jobs and proper accommodations (if needed)
- Be included in the activities within the organizations
- Have equal opportunities to grow

To create such inclusive environment, 53% of our interviewees mentioned “recruiting PWDs” as the first action companies should take.

Meanwhile, besides the course of actions that have been mention in the previous sections, the other suggestions that companies could take includes:

- Having team bonding activities to enhance the team spirits and relationships among employees.
- Create affinity groups where PWDs can share their experience with their colleagues and enhance the understanding as well as the collaboration within the company.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this study is to understand the common perceived fears and benefits associated with hiring PWDs; how these fears can be managed and the best practices of hiring and creating an inclusive environment for PWDs. Based on that, the “fear of uncertainty” from companies can be alleviated to help companies have more confidence in recruiting people with disabilities and create an inclusive working environment for them.

According to the results, it can be seen that the main perceived fears and risks associated with hiring PWDs are splitted into 3 groups:

- Quality of the job performance
- Negative reactions from the existing employees towards the recruitment decision and towards people with disabilities
- Whether companies can create an inclusive working environment for PWDs or not

This finding is also aligned and supported by the findings from other previous authors, including Amir et al (2009), Kaye et al. (2011) and (Heera, 2016).

To address the concern regarding quality of the job performance, this research suggests that companies should identify key requirements for the job to understand the must-have criteria for the position. Based on that, they can evaluate if the person is suitable for the job, whether the disabilities the person has might be relevant for the job or not, and if any accommodation is needed. Additionally, through an internship or a trial period, companies would also have the opportunity to evaluate the fit of the person for the job.

However, to ensure that PWDs will be able to maximize their contribution to the companies, prior to the enter of the PWDs, the HR should check with them to see if any accommodation (i.e. to the office, the working schedule or the equipment) is needed. In case any accommodation should be provided, the companies should have the accommodation available by the time PWDs join the companies, so that they can perform the job at the full capabilities right away. Nevertheless, it is also important to note that as mentioned in the research, the fear about job performance of PWDs very often arises from the stigmas and prejudices around PWDs even when the types of disabilities the person has are not relevant and have impact on the job. Therefore, the recruiter should watch out for any biases that might impact the recruitment decision, and consider to use hiring algorithms to make better recruitment decision (Keller, 2017).

By hiring people who are suitable for the job, companies can also address their second concern - Negative reactions from the existing employees towards the recruitment decision and towards people with disabilities. Moreover, to tackle any possible concerns of the existing employees in working and interacting with PWDs, general training and guidance materials regarding disability awareness should be made available for all employees, including the future new joiners of the companies. Moreover, in certain cases, if the ways the person with disabilities communicate or interact might be greatly different from the social norms (such as in the case the person has autism), companies should consider informing the employees and providing additional training and guidance on how to collaborate and work with the person.

Meanwhile, the suggestions for human resources, managers and co-workers to recruit and create an inclusive working environment for PWDs are summarized as below:

Role	Suggestions
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring PWDs • Check with PWDs if any accommodation is needed • Have regular catch up or have a to see if any adjustment and accommodation is needed • Having optional online/ offline training for all employees to raise disability awareness • Create support group for PWDs so they can share the experience and have support • Have trial period to evaluate the performance of PWDs.
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take training on disability awareness • Hiring PWDs • Have team bonding activities • Assign suitable job for PWDs • Have regular catch up and performance review • Have trial period to evaluate the performance of PWDs. • Give equal chance of promotions to PWDs
Co-workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open to work with PWDs • Take training on disability awareness

Table 4. Suggestions to create an inclusive working environment for PWDs

These course of actions, when being taken, will not only benefits PWDs, but also benefits their co-workers and the companies by creating an inclusive working environment for the employees.

Meanwhile, this research also points out an important role of the government in increasing the participation of PWDs in the workforce. To alter the perception towards PWDs in the workplace, governments should be more active in hiring PWDs and change the narratives around PWDs. Instead of focusing on the benefits and incentives of hiring PWDs, the governments should promote PWDs as valuable employees and for their ability.

Though there would not be a “one rule fits all”, since each person with disabilities would have different needs, and there are other factors like the types of job or the company’s, the findings of the research aims to serve as a guidance to help companies be more confident and more open to hire PWDs.

6. LIMITATIONS

During our study, we have identified some important limitations that should be taken into account.

First of all, the results of the research are exposed to the limitations of the quota sampling method, including being influenced by the selection bias of the researcher.

Secondly the sample size is relatively small, and a conclusive research was not performed to confirm the findings of the exploratory research. Therefore, it might impact the reliability of the results and the ability to generalize the findings.

Thirdly, the interviewees also scatter around the world. Hence, local policies for disabled people were not taken into account during our study.

Fourthly, majority of interviews were conducted online, and some only with voice call. Hence, we are not able to detect the non-verbal cues of the interviewees, and caused some difficulties in guiding the interview.

Fifth, for interviewees with disabilities, this research only include interviewees with physical disabilities, and all the participants from our study works in client services field. Hence, some of the conclusions we have reached in our study might not be applicable for other types of disabilities or for other industries.

7. FUTURE RESEARCH

Following the pinpointed limitations, we strongly advise that a quantitative study should be made in the future to validate the conclusions this research has made.

Additionally, similar research by country should be considered as the differences in local policies or cultures might impact the view of the people on this topic.

Finally, research for specific industry or specific type of disabilities could be made to confirm the findings of this research are also applicable for different industries or types of disabilities.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A - Commonly-asked questions by PWDs (Harvard.edu, 2017):

- How many PWDs do you have in your organization?
- What accommodations are available for people like me?
- Does the organization have formal diversity initiatives and programs in place?
- Do you have employee affinity groups that focus on the needs of people like me and other groups?
- What are my chances for progressing/advancing my career here?
- How many of the people like me are in professional or technical positions?
- How many people like me are in middle and senior management positions?
- What initiatives has the organization participated in regarding diversity?
- Do you have a formal career development or/ and mentoring programs for people like me and other diverse groups?
- Are managers trained to communicate with and manage diverse employees, including those with disabilities?

Appendix B - Topic Guide

Research goals of the interviews:

To answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceived challenges associated with hiring PWDs?
2. What are the benefits of hiring PWDs?
3. What can organizations do to tackle the challenges and create an inclusive working environment for PWDs?

A. Introduction & consent - 3 min:

- *Self introduction*
- *Ask for their agreement to participate in the interview.*

Currently, I am doing this research about people with disabilities in the workplace as part of my Master's thesis.

The interview will be around 30 minutes and participation is optional. You can cease the interview or omit any questions at any time you want.

The questionnaire will not include any information that could be used to personally identify you. The information provided will only be used for an academic purpose. Given that, would you be willing to participate in the interview?

I also would like to voice record this interview, so that I can take notes of the answers afterwards. Would it be okay for you?

Before we start, do you have any questions for me?

B. Warm-up/ Qualification questions – 3 min:

1. Do you identify yourself as a person with a disabilities? (*By disabilities, I mean any difference or an absence of body structure, body function, or mental functions, which might cause difficulties for you in performing daily activities, such as having difficulty walking, eating, hearing, seeing, or prevent you from participating in social activities. Can be visible or invisible - By invisible, I mean the disabilities might not be apparent immediately to other people*).
2. **If yes to question 1:** Would you describe your disabilities as visible or invisible (*By invisible, I mean the disabilities might not be apparent immediately to other people*).
3. How many years have you been working?
4. **If no to question 1:** Out of those years, have you ever worked with people with disabilities?
5. **If yes to question 4:** How many people with disabilities have you worked with?
Does the person you work with have visible or invisible disabilities?
Did you work with them as their co-worker or as their manager?
6. **If no to question 4:** Are you currently working in a managerial position or in an executive position?

C. Discussion:

OPTION 1: For people with disabilities:

Are you currently working in any organization?

If not: When was the last time that you worked?

Can you tell me a bit more about your (previous) working experience?

If the person does not specify their position, ask if he/she works/worked in a managerial position or not.

Discussion of their experience in finding jobs – 7 mins

- Have you faced any difficulties in finding jobs in the past?
- Which channels/ or platform did you use to find the jobs?
- Do you think in general, other people with disabilities also face similar challenges to yours?
- Is there any specific thing if organizations mentioned that on the job advertisement, it might discourage you from applying to the job?
- Is there any specific thing if organizations mentioned that on the job advertisement, it might encourage you to apply to the job?

Discussion of their experience in the workplace – 15 mins

- When you first join the organization, do you face any challenges, either with the work, or with the working environment? *If yes, what are they?*
- Did the company ask you if you need any accommodation at some point during the interview or after you join the company? (*By accommodation, I mean any change to the application or hiring process, to the job, to the way the job is done, or the work environment that could help you to qualify for the job or perform the job better. Example of accommodation are accessible office with elevator, flexible working hours, or special equipments for the job*)
- Did you feel the need for any accommodation in any of your work? *If yes, did the company offer you the accommodation that you need?*
- Did you receive any support from any organization that you have worked for to help you adapt to the job better?
- Did you receive any onboarding training?
- On estimation, how long does it take you to adapt to a new job or a new environment?
- Thinking back to your experience, was it hard or easy for you to get to know and get along with your coworkers?
- Are there any other people with disabilities also in your organizations?
- Do you feel that you have an inclusive working environment in any of the workplace that you have been working for? (*By inclusive working environment, I mean that you feel included in*

activities in the office, that you are comfortable being yourselves in the company, that you are being treated equally and have equal opportunities in comparison with your co-workers)
If yes, are there any specific things that organizations do that make you feel that way?
If not, what do you think that the company could have done differently to improve the working environment for you?

- Is there anything you like about the working environment in your (previous) company?
- Is there anything you dislike about the working environment in your (previous) company?
- What are some of the things you think organizations can do to create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities?

Discussion of their opinions on suggested solutions to create an inclusive working environment (if they have not yet mentioned these actions) – 15 mins

- What do you think about organizations providing training to co-workers on disabilities and etiquettes when working with people with disabilities? Do you know if any of the organizations you worked for have that training?
- What do you think about organizations asking employees if they need any accommodations before the employees join the organizations?
- Do you think organizations should make accommodations ready by the time the employees enter the organizations?
- What do you think about managers having an enter catch up meeting with employees who have disabilities to check if they need any accommodation while working?
- Do you think managers and employees with disabilities should have a regular catch up to see if the need for accommodation changes over time?
- Do you think having a regular sharing session with other people with disabilities in the company can be a helpful approach? *If yes, how often should this session be?*
- Based on our discussion so far, is there anything else you can think of that organizations can apply to create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities?

OPTION 2: For managers without disabilities and have worked with people with disabilities:

Discussion of their perception about hiring and working with people with disabilities – 7 mins

- In general, do you think organizations have a positive or negative attitude towards hiring people with disabilities?
- Why do you think they have such an attitude?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 is “strongly disagree” and 10 is “strongly agree” - “Companies should hire PWDs”.
- What are some fears or risks that you think companies might have when hiring people with disabilities?
- Are there any benefits that companies have in hiring PWDs?
- Do you think in the workplace, PWDs can perform as well as people without disabilities?

Discussion of their experience in hiring people with disabilities – 7 mins

- Did you directly recruit the employee with disabilities?

If yes, ask them to understand:

- *How the recruitment worked*
- *If they collaborate with any external organization to support you with the recruitment process*
- *If the recruitment process is different for a person with disabilities and without disabilities*
- *Their learning during the recruitment process*
- *If they have any fears/ concerns before the recruitment. If yes, how did they manage it?*
- *If they face any challenge after the recruitment. If yes, how did they manage it?*
- *If the company has any initiative to support people with disabilities. If yes, follow up to see how the initiatives work.*
- *Ask if any accommodation was provided during the recruitment process.*

- Did you receive any training about how to manage/ interact with people with disabilities, or about the disabilities of the person that you are going to work with?
If yes, what aspect did you receive training for? Did you find the training helpful?
- If you could share some advice with a manager who is going to recruit people with disabilities, what would you tell them?

Discussion of inclusive working environment for people with disabilities – 7 mins

- Do you think nowadays, companies are paying attention to create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities? *(By inclusive working environment, I mean that you feel included in activities in the office, that you are comfortable being yourselves in the company, that you are being treated equally and have equal opportunities in comparison with your co-workers)*
- Do you think companies should create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities?
- What are examples of things you think companies can do to create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities?/ Did you adjust anything in daily work culture to create a more inclusive working environment for people with disabilities? Did you observe a change in the dynamic of the team after the person with disabilities joined?
- What do you think about the performance of the employees with disabilities that you have worked with?
- Is there anything surprising that you learn throughout the process?

OPTION 3: For co-workers without disabilities and have worked with people with disabilities:

Discussion of their perception about hiring and working with people with disabilities – 7 mins

- In general, do you think organizations have a positive or negative attitude towards hiring people with disabilities? Why do you think so?
- Why do you think they have such an attitude?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 is “strongly disagree” and 10 is “strongly agree” - “Companies should hire PWDs”.
- What are some fears or risks that you think companies might have when hiring people with disabilities?
- Are there any benefits that companies have in hiring PWDs?
- Do you think in the workplace, PWDs can perform as well as people without disabilities?

Discussion of their experience in hiring people with disabilities – 7 mins

- Does your company have any initiative to support people with disabilities in the workplace?
- Did you receive any training about working and interacting with people with disabilities, or about the disabilities of the person that you are going to work with?
If yes, what aspect did you receive training for? Did you find the training helpful?
- How was your experience working with your coworker who has disabilities?
- Is there anything surprising that you find during the process?
- How is the relationship between your coworker who has disabilities and other people in the company?
- negHow do you think your coworkers would describe the performance of your coworker who has disabilities?
- Is there anything surprising that you learn throughout the process?
- If you could share some advice with a person who is going to work with people with disabilities, what would you tell them?

Discussion of an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities – 7 mins

- Do you think nowadays, companies are paying attention to create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities? *(By inclusive working environment, I mean that you feel included in activities in the office, that you are comfortable being yourselves in the*

company, that you are being treated equally and have equal opportunities in comparison with your co-workers)

- Do you think your company has an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities? *If yes, what are the things the company does that make you feel that way?*
- Do you think companies should create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities?
- Are there anything else you think companies can do to create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities?
- Are there anything else you think the managers or coworkers can do to create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities?

OPTION 5: For people without disabilities and have not worked with people with disabilities:

Discussion of their perception about hiring and working with people with disabilities – 7 mins

- In general, do you think organizations have a positive or negative attitude towards hiring people with disabilities?
- Why do you think they have such an attitude?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 is “strongly disagree” and 10 is “strongly agree” - “Companies should hire PWDs”.
- What are some fears or risks that you think companies might have when hiring people with disabilities?
- Are there any benefits that companies have in hiring PWDs?
- Do you think in the workplace, PWDs can perform as well as people without disabilities?

Discussion of their perception about working with disabilities – 7 mins

- For a company that is going to recruit a person with disabilities, is there any training or information you think the company should share with the managers/ teammates who are going to work with people with disabilities?
If yes, what kind of training or information?

Discussion of an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities Do you think nowadays, companies are paying attention to create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities? *(By inclusive working environment, I mean that you feel included in activities in the office, that you are comfortable being yourselves in the company, that you are being treated equally and have equal – 7 mins*

opportunities in comparison with your co-workers)

- Do you think companies should create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities?
- Anything you can think of that companies can do to create an inclusive working environment for people with disabilities?

D. Conclusion – 5 mins

Thank you a lot for sharing your experience and your thoughts. It is a very helpful contribution. Before we close the discussion, I just want to check if there is anything regarding the topics that cross your mind but you have not mentioned?

Thank the respondent for their participation.

